# CULTURAL IMPERIALISM AND THE DECLINE OF THE LIBERAL ORDER

## RUSSIAN AND WESTERN SOFT POWER IN EASTERN EUROPE

G. DOUG DAVIS AND MICHAEL O. SLOBODCHIKOFF

# Cultural Imperialism and the Decline of the Liberal Order

# Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European Politics

Series Editor: Michael O. Slobodchikoff, Troy University

**Mission Statement**

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, little attention was paid to Russia, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. The United States and many Western governments reassigned their analysts to address different threats. Scholars began to focus much less on Russia, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union, instead turning their attention to East Asia among other regions. With the descent of Ukraine into civil war, scholars and governments have lamented the fact that there are not enough scholars studying Russia, Eurasia, and Eastern Europe. This series focuses on the Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European region. We invite contributions addressing problems related to the politics and relations in this region. This series is open to contributions from scholars representing comparative politics, international relations, history, literature, linguistics, religious studies, and other disciplines whose work involves this important region. Successful proposals will be accessible to a multidisciplinary audience, and advance our understanding of Russia, Eurasia, and Eastern Europe.

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## *Russian and Western Soft Power in Eastern Europe*

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LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

6 Tinworth Street, London SE11 5AL

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Available**

ISBN 978-1-4985-8586-6 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-4985-8587-3 (electronic)

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

To our wives, Marinella and Tatyana,
whose presence makes each of us whole.

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# Acknowledgments

Writing a book is an incredibly difficult undertaking and is impossible without the help of many people and institutions. We are very grateful for the help of the Faculty Development Committee at Troy University, which provided funding for Dr. Davis in the form of a research grant. This grant led to the chapter on Poland. We are also thankful to the Faculty Development Committee for providing funding to present conference papers at the International Studies Association annual conferences. These conference papers and the feedback that we received from discussants and other colleagues at these gatherings were vital to making this book possible.

We are also very grateful to our colleagues in Eastern Europe, Russia, and the United States for providing feedback, discussion, and aid in the process of writing this book. We appreciate all of the suggestions, comments, and criticism that we have received along the way. We are also thankful for the research assistance provided by Ms. Alicia Rodriguez Castillo and Mr. Christian Knight.

The publishing process is a very difficult one. We appreciate the help and guidance of both Joseph Parry and Bryndee Ryan at Lexington Books for their aid in making this project a reality. We would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers who have read this book and provided valuable feedback, making it stronger.

Finally, we'd like to thank our families for their patience, advice, and support during this process. They have made tremendous sacrifices for this project, and we would like them to know how much we appreciate them. Words don't have the capacity to express our gratitude to them.

*Chapter One*

# Introduction

The study of power is fundamental within international relations and scholars have long been interested in the relative power between states. Traditionally, most analysis has focused on economic or military prowess that can be harnessed and used to compel other countries to act in accordance with the interests of strong states. While the Treaty of Westphalia recognized state sovereignty, anarchy continued to exist at the global level. Classical realist and neorealist scholars recognized the lack of any authority in the international realm and the resultant lawlessness (Fearon 1995; Grieco 1988; Morgenthau 1948; Walt 2002; Waltz 1979); their insight shows how this chaos generates competition between countries. States must maximize their military and economic might to enhance their defense since no other partner can guarantee their survival in the international system. One problem is that as states' military capacity increases, the security of other countries simultaneously weakens and this consequent vulnerability causes a security dilemma.[1] This approach to international relations gives prominence to relative gains[2] and predicts that states will emphasize and expand their power at others' expense, thus reducing the potential for cooperation as most international issues lead to a zero-sum gain where there are winners and losers to every international agreement. States following this paradigm will maximize their military and economic power at all times to enhance their strategic advantage over potential rivals.

In contrast to classical and neorealist academics, hegemonic stability scholars argue that while global anarchy exists, the historical record shows that it can be overcome. A hegemonic state can establish rules and get other countries to comply and abide by its rubrics. The dominant power creates an international order with clearly defined roles for all other states in the system and this works to solve the security dilemma as the hegemon declines over

time due to the costs of maintaining the system (Kennedy 1989 and Gilpin 1981). If any one state violates the rules and the imposed order, the hegemon has the power to correct the errant behavior. States understand their roles and the structure provides benefits to them on condition that they operate according to the established norms. Specifically, scholars such as Kindleberger (1973, 1995) and Gilpin (1983), argue that the power of a hegemonic state creates both global stability and operative rules of interactions that reflect the preferences of the dominant country. The hegemon's goal, therefore, is to maximize its power so that it can fashion its own global order, which in turn determines the rules of behavior for all other states within the system. A hegemonic state will institutionalize a system of rules and institutions that preserve and advance its goals and values.[3] However, a hegemonic state cannot create a global order without enough power and influence to be able to both convince other states of the validity of such an order and the ability to enforce the rules of the global order.

The hegemonic stability theory and realism are fundamental international relations analytic frameworks, but each has limited explanatory capability because it ignores the role that culture plays in impacting a nation's identity, interests, and ethos. When power is limited or confined to economic or military dimensions, it ignores the factors that affect the agency of the state targeted with pressure from great powers. Stephen Walt (2005) shows that small states can resist great powers even when the costs are high and when the United States global role is perceived as legitimate or attractive, fewer states are willing to bear the costs of opposing it. When the great power begins to decline economically, politically, or culturally, its legitimacy and ability to get other states to imitate it or to act in accord with its interests decrease and it would need to rely more on military power and threats in order to maintain the system. A hegemon needs to preserve its international legitimacy or it will experience weakening global power even if its economy and military force are increasing relative to its current and potential rivals. Another important element is the attractiveness of the dominant power's economy, culture, and political system; it is hard to get other states to follow a leader who is in decline. Small states have a greater capacity than recognized to limit the hegemon's reach even when the dominant power is not opposed directly.[4]

## THE CONCEPT OF POWER

While the concept of power has expanded over the centuries, examining its etymology is important to understand its diverse applications in contemporary usage. The English term "power" has origins in classical Latin in the word *potēre* which means having "the potential to act" or "to be able to." All

contemporary European languages possess a derivative word that has its roots in Latin. This term spread from Latin to French and evolved from the ninth to the fourteenth century to move beyond the classical meaning to reflect authority and strength, and it came to be applied to the armed forces in the thirteenth century. Its first English usage can be traced to the 1300s and it retained the original classical meaning. The term power was first applied to international politics in an article in the *London Gazette* that referenced the "Ballance of Power in Europe [original spelling]." Power today may refer to the ability to act, political or national strength, authority or dominion over others, conferred permission, capacity to influence others, the expansion of political prowess, and many other similar applications. The contemporary term is always rooted in its classical origin meaning that one has the potential to act.

Traditional definitions of power focus on the individual level of analysis within the political science discipline. Specifically, it has been defined as the ability of a person to influence another individual to change their behavior and act in a manner corresponding to the interests of the actor extending the pressure. For example, Neustadt (1960) used this definition of power when examining the United States presidential branch. He asked whether presidents were able to influence members of Congress to vote in favor of a proposal if they would normally be opposed to it. The more Congressmen the executive was able to influence, the more powerful the president. However, a weak president was one who could not influence Congressmen to vote in favor of his policies if these individuals were initially opposed to them.

It is of interest to note that Neustadt (1960) observed that the more successful a president was at influencing Congressmen to vote for his policies, the more latent power the president was able to build up, which made it much easier to convince Congressmen to support future policies. However, this power that presidents were able to build was not static but could grow by either successfully persuading members of Congress or through public support. The higher a president's approval ratings, the more latent power he possessed. In contrast, when the president's approval ratings declined, the executive was less likely to be able to win over the members of Congress to his position.

This application of power seems to equivocate its meaning with influence. If an individual has power, one can sway another person to act in a way in which he or she would normally not act. However, if an individual does not have power, the individual is much less likely to be able to influence another individual to behave in a way in which he or she would not normally behave. In other words, power is the ability to influence the behavior of an individual, whereas influence is the actual act of forcing someone to behave in a certain way.

The preceding discussion has focused on examining power from the individual level of analysis. When examining power at the interstate level of analysis, it is possible to define power in the same way. Specifically, power is the ability of one state to influence another state to behave in a way that state would normally not behave. The main difference is that while a president can draw on approval ratings to influence the behavior of individuals, states lack this ability. Thus, the source of power is important to analyze when examining the power of states over other states.

Traditionally, international relations theory has focused on power for states coming from either military or economic factors. Both neorealism and neoliberalism have examined the power of states from these two aspects. The biggest difference between the two approaches is whether relative or absolute gains should be the primary focus for states. In other words, realists view cooperation as being secondary to power. If state "i" were to cooperate with state "j," state "i" would be concerned that any gains made by state "j" would affect the balance of power between the two states and vice versa. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, is willing to accept that cooperation can benefit both states, and is not concerned about the balance of power in a bilateral relationship. What is important about both neoliberalism and neorealism is that they are concerned with economic and military power, believing that these types of power can easily be used to influence weaker states into behaving in a way that the stronger power wishes. Further, this understanding of power can be quantified, as economic power can be operationalized by using GDP among other economic measures, and military power is often represented through the capability of armed forces. For example, a state can influence other states by having larger militaries, more sophisticated weaponry, and the ability to use the military to wage war on another state in the system (Mearsheimer 2003).

One weakness with the neoliberal or neorealist operationalization of power is that both schools assume that power is unidimensional. In fact, Volgy and Bailin (2003) refer to this empirical problem as the "unidimensional assumption" of power. They further argue that power should be reconceptualized so that it can be more adequately measured than just by military capabilities or economic power. One approach to reconceptualizing the notion of power is to return to older theories that predate its current understanding. For example, classical realism views power as being much deeper than military and economic. The concept of power according to classical realism is endogenous at the state level and comes not only from military power but also from ideology (Morgenthau 1948).

Another way to cognize the concept of power is to separate it into different components; this expands the understanding by adding aspects to the term. If Volgy and Bailin are correct and the problem with the application of power is that it is too narrow, then it is logical to amend this and add

dimensions to the concept. For example, Joseph Nye has created a notion of "power with adjectives."[5] Specifically Nye (1990b, 2002, 2004) defines the total concept of power as a sum of smaller parts of power. He identifies the concept of "hard power" as being the traditional definition of a state's military and economic capabilities and the concept of "soft power" [6] as being the ability to influence state behavior not through military might and coercion, but by attraction. In other words, the strong state entices others to adopt its values and ideals thus changing their behavior. According to Nye, soft power is not only used by states, but also by other actors in the global system such as international institutions.

One organization that uses soft power to directly influence other states is the European Union (EU). In fact, Grabbe (2006) argues that the EU has extensive transformative power to affect domestic policies of states who wish to become members. She states that the way in which the European Union is able to alter the domestic policies of non-member states is through the ascension process. The EU is able to promise future membership to Central and Eastern European states in exchange for the adoption of its shared norms. For example, Slobodchikoff (2010) found that Brussels was able to get Latvia to drastically change its citizenship laws to be more accommodating to the Russian minority to ensure its EU membership. Brussels withheld membership until Riga was able to prove that it not only changed the laws on attaining Latvian citizenship, but it also demonstrated that the Russian minority would be protected and allowed to integrate within Latvian society. It should be noted that this transformative power of the European Union is only effective when states wish to become members. Despite this, many Eastern European states still desire to join the EU (Caplanova, Orviska, and Hudson 2004).

Interestingly, the EU does not have a military force. While each of its member states possesses a military, the EU prides itself on not being a military power, but rather an ideational or normative power that is able to be used among member states or to influence other states (Grabbe 2006; Jabko 2006; Manners 2002, 2006; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004; Sjursen 2004). Although many of the European Union's official documents prior to the Copenhagen Criteria only implicitly discuss the norms it espouses, subsequent official documents such as the Treaty of Madrid specifically state that the European Union should be guided by those normative values upon which it was founded in matters of international affairs (Tocci 2008). The Copenhagen Criteria explicitly establish not only the norms that must be internalized by those states that want to become members, but are also a very effective way of spreading soft power, especially postmodern values, to other states.

Ultimately, soft power is extremely important in influencing other states. In one of his seminal pieces, Nye (2002) discusses the paradox of American

power. Specifically, he states that despite the fact that there is a preponderance of American military (hard) power, American influence has been steadily declining. He finds this trend to have started following the end of the Cold War, but it has become especially acute after the events of September 11, 2001 and the lead-up to the second Iraq War in 2003. By using both the concepts of hard and soft power, he is able to demonstrate that both types of power in tandem are necessary to influence other actors in the system. The more hard and soft power an actor possesses at the systemic level, the more likely that actor is to influence other actors within the international system.

Susan Strange (1989) provides another means to assess different components of the concept of power by distinguishing between relational and structural strength. Relational strength is the typical conceptualization that most scholars use when they discuss power as a state's military capabilities. Structural strength, on the other hand, is the ability of the hegemon to create what Volgy and Imwalle (2000) refer to as the "new global architecture." In other words, the concept of power is actually made up of traditional notions of power in addition to power according to hegemonic stability theory.

Ultimately, the benefit of partitioning the concept of power into multiple components as Nye and Strange have done, is that it provides a more realistic perspective from which to assess relationships and order within the international system. The concept has evolved to include elements that impact a state's identity, interests, and ethos. For example, Laidi (1998) offers a French perspective on this and notes that the United States and European Union have had a legitimacy crisis following the end of the Cold War as power has become separated from meaning. This has resulted in a fall in Western structural strength which occurred simultaneously with a growth in its military supremacy. Nye (2002), through this new understanding of power, is able to demonstrate that although the United States' hard power has increased significantly since the end of the Cold War, its ability to influence other actors has decreased due to a significant decline in its soft power. Similarly, Volgy and Bailin (2003) find that although the United States' relational strength has significantly augmented since the end of the Cold War, its structural strength has fallen considerably. If power is limited to its military dimension, it would be impossible to explain how American and Western European power has fallen at the same time as its military strength has grown.

It should be noted that even if scholars understand that power is not unidimensional, they should also grasp that influence cannot be projected globally at the same level. In other words, the ability for a state to employ power decreases with distance (Boulding 1962; Bueno de Mesquita 1981; Rhamey et al. 2015). Thus, the United States is able to project its power over great distances, but the farther a state is from the United States, the less powerfully the United States can affect it. Following the end of the Cold

War, Eastern European states requested that the United States and Western Europe bring their influence into their region. This was done for two reasons. First of all, the Cold War and Soviet dominance of Eastern Europe was so painful that these states never wanted it repeated. Second, Eastern European governments understood that while Russia was at the nadir of its ability to influence other states at the end of the Cold War, it would only gain in power and that Russia was geographically closer to Eastern Europe than the United States. Thus, Eastern Europe recognized that the end of the Cold War was the correct time for the West to increase its influence geographically and expand to the East.

Much of the preceding discussion has focused on defining power and influence and examining how states and organizations can spread their dominance. While it seems as though this analysis has been impartial, it has been from the perspective of a strong state. For example, we have discussed how power is the ability to influence a state to behave in a way in which that state would normally not behave. What we have not addressed is that power and influence have a cost for the weaker state. While the stronger state gains power through its ability to induce change, the weaker state not only loses power, but pays a cost by being persuaded by the stronger state. Returning to the individual level discussed earlier in the chapter, if a president convinces a member of Congress to vote in favor of a given proposal when the member of Congress is not in favor of it, changing a vote could end up costing the legislator the next election, or possibly could violate strongly held personal beliefs. This is the case with states and organizations as well. Returning to the discussion of the EU, joining the EU for its economic benefits means that states must fully accept EU norms and values even if they are contrary to the traditional convictions of a specific state. This is the case for Eastern Europe.

Eastern Europe has been fought over for centuries by Western Europe on the one hand and Russia and the Soviet Union on the other. It is at a cultural crossroads as it shares many traits with Russia as well as Western Europe. Following World War II, the Soviet Union quickly moved to take over Eastern Europe and firmly establish it within its own sphere of influence, so that formerly independent nations would now become satellite states reliant upon and subordinate to Moscow. The USSR established a regional order and tightly controlled the internal and external politics of Eastern European states. Much of the control that the Soviet Union exerted was in the form of either direct or implied hard power. Moscow was not hesitant to use force to maintain its rule and used its military to suppress uprisings. Often, Moscow's use of hard power came at a great cost to human life in Eastern Europe. Although the USSR exercised total control over Eastern Europe in terms of policy, this influence came at a high cost as it generated resistance within the subordinate territories.

Russian hard power alienated people in the satellite states and by the late 1980s Eastern Europeans began to distance themselves from the Soviet Union. In a chain reaction, Eastern European states began to overthrow the communist parties in their respective countries and transition towards democracy. Most of the Eastern European states embraced capitalism and moved away from a planned economy. They were also quick to adopt the ideology and institutions of Western Europe as a way of further distancing themselves from the Soviet Union.

While culturally many of the Eastern European countries were closer to the Soviet Union and Russia, they nevertheless adopted Western ideology and thought. The establishment of Western institutions further solidified Eastern Europe's ideological ties with the West which, in turn, helped to expand Western soft power to the region. By accepting Western ideology and philosophy, Eastern European culture and philosophical heritage began to erode despite having survived communist domination. While the Soviet Union politically neutralized most of the Eastern European countries during the Cold War, these states were able to maintain their culture. Now the region faces a new threat: cultural extinction. For example, the advancement of Western soft power and its assault on traditional Eastern European values has led many Polish philosophers to realize that Poland is under greater threat of losing its cultural identity now than at any time during the Cold War.

Following the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, Russia has determined that strengthening its soft power capabilities is a national priority. It has bolstered its soft power and has made a concerted effort to expand its presence in Eastern Europe. While not as effective as Western soft power, Russian soft power has spread and is slowly making Eastern Europe an ideological battleground between Russia and the West.

The election of Donald Trump in 2016 has again caused scholars to reexamine the United States' place in the world. Trump's apparent embrace of Vladimir Putin and attempt to improve relations with Russia has led to trepidation among Eastern European states as they are not certain how to understand the current power dynamics. On the one hand, they look to the United States as the global hegemon and leader of the world, while on the other hand they see a resurgent Russia who is challenging the United States and insisting it have a seat at the table of global governance. Eastern Europe again finds itself in the crosshairs of the great power game and geopolitics. It is faced with the fundamental question of whether to align itself with Washington, Moscow, or go it alone. While accepting the cultural dominance of either Washington or Moscow would provide stability and certainty moving forward, the cost of accepting such cultural dominance and the spread of soft power comes at a great cost. Thus, the decisions of these Eastern European countries on their own future relations with Washington and Moscow are extremely vital to their ultimate survival.

This book examines Western and Russian soft power and their ability to spread and increase influence globally. Two case studies examining Poland and Serbia are employed to examine the effectiveness of both Western and Russian soft power. Our findings show that while Russian soft power had spread to both Serbia and Poland, Moscow's hard power and military posturing severely limit the effectiveness of its soft power efforts and work to drive Eastern European countries to the Western sphere of influence. Ultimately, Eastern Europe is destroying its own local cultures by accepting Western soft power. Additionally, Eastern European states are succumbing to Western cultural imperialism and ensuring that the battle of ideology will continue to be waged in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A natural reaction to succumbing to Western cultural imperialism is the rise of nationalist and far-right parties to counter the loss of local cultures. While Russia has stoked the growth of far right nationalist parties in Eastern Europe, Russia is not the cause of the growth of these parties. Rather, the rise of nationalist and far-right parties is a reaction to the cultural imperialism of the West. As these parties gain more power and relevance, Eastern Europe will continue to be a battleground between these competing powers.

In chapter 2, we discuss Western soft power and ideology. We introduce the concept of Western cultural imperialism through institutional change such as the normative power of the EU and ideational power and change. The West wants to spread its ideology, but there is little room for cohabitation. Western philosophy and ideology by definition must negate many of the cultural traditions and norms of Eastern European countries. Thus, Eastern European nations must choose to erode their cultures and traditions in order to accept Western soft power and ideology.

Chapter 3 examines Russian soft power and considers its cultural roots. We present Russian philosophy and ideology and show how Russian soft power was at its lowest point when the Soviet Union collapsed. Russia needed to redefine its national identity before it could build up its soft power. Until the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Russian government did not actively seek to spread its soft power; however, after this event Moscow aggressively tried to reassert its influence in Eastern Europe. While Russian soft power is built upon Russian philosophy and culture, nevertheless, its primary focus is to counter Western thinking and ideology. It does not promote a new ideology and this is especially attractive to conservative Eastern Europeans who see the destruction caused by the spread of Western soft power.

In chapter 4 we present our first case study and examine how both Western and Russian soft power influence Poland. We examine the cultural transformation that has taken place within Poland as a result of its encounter with the West. Although Poland was deeply affected and culturally scarred under Soviet domination, its culture largely remained intact. This situation changed

as Poland adopted a market economy and opened its airwaves to Western European and US cultural influences. We pay specific attention to Polish culture and traditions and describe their evolution in the post-communist period. Ironically, as the threat to its culture grew, Polish society lowered its guard and quickly adopted Western norms. This transformation originated in the period leading up to Polish EU and NATO membership and deepened in the years that followed. While Russian soft power is present in Poland through nostalgia and cultural values, it has not been effective due to Warsaw's wariness of Moscow's hard power and its mistrust of its larger neighbor. Instead, Warsaw has fully embraced Western soft power to the detriment of its own traditional values.

In chapter 5, we examine Serbia in light of both Western and Russian soft power. On one hand, Serbia shares a similar religion and many cultural traditions with Russia; on the other hand, it is a candidate state seeking EU membership and has tried to embrace Western institutions. Following the defeat of president Milosevich, Serbia has focused on joining Western organizations and further integrating into Western Europe. Serbia is an important case to study because it is working very hard to maintain its culture by trying to balance Western and Russian soft power. Serbia is not as mistrustful of Russia as Poland is and, therefore, has accepted Russian soft power to a larger extent than Warsaw. Serbia is becoming a battleground state for influence between the West and Russia, which allows Serbia to gain valuable concessions and aid from both the EU and Russia.

In chapter 6, we point out the importance soft power has and focus on its impact on ethnic cultures and philosophy. Eastern Europe is again a site of great power contestation as Russia and the West engage in competitive social engineering that seeks to make their respective ideologies and influence attractive in the region. However, Russia must overcome the lack of trust among many Eastern European states to make its soft power viable in the locality. While Russian philosophy and cultural values are closer to those of Eastern European countries and thus less of a threat than Western European thought, Eastern European states are more likely to continue to be influenced by Western Europe until Russia can regain their confidence. In turn, Western ideology and philosophy will continue to erode Eastern European cultures and traditions.

This book serves two purposes. First of all, it shows that although the end of the Cold War brought Russia to its lowest point, Moscow has been actively working to improve its soft power. It has established its soft power and ideology to be a viable alternative to that proposed by the West. Russia has created more of a traditional ideology that stands in stark contrast to the postmodern creed proposed by the West. However, Russia's use of hard power and the institutional memory of the Soviet Union's actions during the Cold War limit Russia's ability to spread its soft power in Eastern Europe.

The second important contribution this book makes is that it examines the cost of spreading influence through soft power. While it is relatively easy to assess the functionality and limits of hard power, it is much more difficult to assess how persuasion takes place through soft power. Yet, the loss of traditional culture and ideology is no less important than many of the costs imposed by spreading influence through hard power.

Ultimately, the impact of expanding Western culture, institutions, and norms into Eastern Europe will be both high and long-lasting. It is very difficult to resurrect culture and traditions once they have been changed.

## NOTES

1. The security dilemma refers to the fact that as one state intensifies security, other states in the international system must respond in kind to ensure that they do not lose security in relation to the other state. For more information on the security dilemma, see Jervis 1978, Schweller 1996, and Wendt 2010.
2. Relative gains refers to a zero sum game between states. If one state makes gains in the global system, all other actors must therefore not be as powerful. For more information on relative gains, see Grieco, Powell, and Snidal 1993 and Snidal 1991.
3. It should be noted that hegemonic states do not merely maximize their power and create global order. Regional powers also create regional orders. For example, Slobodchikoff (2014) analyzes the regional power dynamics in the post-Soviet space and finds that Russia, as the regional hegemon, created a regional order following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The regional order was nested within the global order established by the United States, the global hegemon.
4. Stephen Walt (2005) provides an account of how small states can resist dominant powers in chapter 3 of his work *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy.*
5. This term builds off Collier and Levitsky's (1997) "Democracy with Adjectives."
6. The concept "soft power" does not originate with Joseph Nye, but in Suphapong Boonyapratuag's master's thesis completed at Rice University in 1984 titled "Military Control in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Study." The first time Joseph Nye employed the expression "soft power" in a published work is found in his 1990 book, *Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power.*

## *Chapter Two*

# Western Cultural Imperialism

> "Conversely, the spirit of late modernity rejects all the truths perceived as a common representation or reality. The latter seems to be a natural consequence of the former, its disapproval and finally, its terrified opposite. The demiurgic absolute of totalitarianism does not have any heirs. It lets its contradiction emerge from its ruins: a new form of nihilism, much different from the nihilism of the 19th century: it is no longer the nihilism of liberation but rather the nihilism of fear. Every truth becomes monstrous."
> —Chantal Millon-Desol 2007, page 80.

Eastern European states[1] are precariously positioned today as they are threatened by an assertive Russia on the East and by a more subtle, but equally dangerous, cultural threat originating in the United States and Western Europe. The surrounded countries face an important dilemma because the West and NATO offer security, but this protection requires them to open their states to destructive cultural influences. This chapter discusses the Western cultural threat to Eastern Europe by examining its philosophical origins, manifestations, and consequences.

The Enlightenment unleashed destructive forces in Eastern Europe as nationalism, fascism, and communism brought suffering, occupation, war, and death to the region (Hook 1968; Kitromilides 1994). Ideas that originated in Western thought wreaked havoc as first fascist regimes brought war only to be followed by decades where governments turned to Marxist systems. When Eastern European nations were freed from Russian control, their culture was opened to epistemologies originating in Western Europe and the United States. In retrospect, this turn promised freedom and economic benefits but it exposed local cultures to new intellectual movements that were foreign to the former Soviet bloc. These contemporary thoughts have proven to be equally destructive to Eastern European nations and have been mani-

fested through two philosophical schools that provide the intellectual framework for the exported Western culture.[2] Both approaches employ a materialist worldview and discredit traditional knowledge by generating a new logic to assess reality. Positivism, the first, is built on the scientific method and economic rationality and uses empirical methods to judge all subjects. Since reality is approached through a materialistic logic, only things that can be numerically measured are conceived as important. The second movement, the linguistic turn, is a postmodern school that announces the end of the Enlightenment and challenges the ability of words to communicate any fixed meaning. It is atheistic in nature and questions whether philosophy is even possible. These two schools of thought have challenged Eastern European cultures by weakening traditional authority and by proposing new values.

Western culture has been manifested in Eastern Europe through consumerism, individualism, and postmodernity/secularism. These orientations promise freedom through the destruction of customs and absolute moral norms. Other social actors, such as the family, religious groups, or unions have become less important as the primary social focus is the relationship between the government and the individual. Multinational commercial interests have gained power as traditional groups lost status and have worked to subordinate the legal system to business interests. This leads to a new mentality where people and property are esteemed by their perceived value and new ethical calculations work to legitimize actions that were previously condemned as immoral. When local cultures are erased, a technocratic language emerges that gives power to specialists and government control increases over society. The local areas that resist the dominant culture become new ghettos cut off from wider society and face increasing pressures to give up their uniqueness. The human person loses his or her identity in the materialistic culture and alienation grows. Western cultural forces threaten Eastern Europe nations on multiple levels with assimilation and disintegration; vulnerable nations are told that their "modernization" will come only by abandoning their culture and by renouncing their provincial past for a more global future.

## METHODOLOGY

This chapter is a case study that examines the philosophic norms present within Western culture that were broadly introduced to Eastern Europe following the events of 1989. The contents may be difficult for Western scholars who consider themselves tolerant and broadminded and who are used to seeing themselves on the right side of history. The story of Western cultural expansion into Eastern Europe is complex as it brings both good and bad elements. The common approach looks at the benefits that originated through

capitalism, democracy, and security institutions which clearly brought improvements to nations that had suffered communist oppression. This tells only half the story as the dominant ethos originating in New York, London, Paris, or other centers imposes standards that transform nations open to their influence; while Westerners are pre-disposed to these ideas, this chapter seeks to identify the destructive consequences this thought has had in Eastern Europe. As such, this section is an inductive case study that highlights the philosophic assumptions present with Western soft power and show how this ethos has manifested itself in Eastern Europe changing national cultures.

This chapter combines international relations scholarship with cultural studies and twentieth-century philosophy. Contemporary Western norms originated within the European Enlightenment and were influenced by British empiricism and French positivism. The West changed gradually over the past two hundred years and the cultural transformation it brought has been broadly accepted within its societies and nation-states. The assumptions that led to this modernization are dominant within the academy, media, and literature and are passed on to other nations through cultural openings. Western soft power is greatly strengthened when its norms are passed on and recipient nations integrate them into their culture. This encounter makes other nations think like Westerners, but this reduces cultural diversity and imposes positivistic norms on Eastern European states.

While the West advocates free speech and liberalism, it does not follow that states open to Western influences are free to choose a different path. Liberalism has not generated greater freedom for nations to maintain their traditions, particularly when it seeks to maintain religious presence in society and governance. Most Westerners accept this characterization and see it as a necessary step for development. One outcome is that contemporary liberalism proposes and accepts only one form of freedom. Western culture does not generate cultural autonomy but rather seeks to impose its norms as alternative conceptions need to be eliminated because they stand in the way of progress.[3] If the philosophical assumptions that generate Western norms are mandatory for development, global freedom would decline as these ideas spread geographically. The result is a cultural conformity that eliminates national traditions and, ironically, destroys global freedom as it seeks to advance it. Aristotle reminds us that it takes more than good intentions to advance the cause of justice; first, it is necessary to accurately understand reality. Good intentions do not guarantee that policies serve the cause of freedom; as this chapter argues, Eastern European cultural diversity declined through its opening to the West.

## THE CONTEMPORARY DILEMMA

The Eastern European states that escaped Soviet control and sought integration into the West pursued membership in the European Union and NATO to preserve their independence and to gain protection from future Russian domination. Several countries have been successful and have gained acceptance into these Western institutions. This membership has offered the desired defense from eastern aggression but it has also brought unforeseen costs as their culture and traditions would be altered and diminished through the encounter with the West. The West, in fact, was not content to provide security guarantees and economic integration; it also wanted to offer more intrusive help that would transform the new member states by imposing different philosophic and cultural norms that would make them more like the liberal European nations. Since the West saw its principles as good, the help it provided was designed to assist and improve the new member states. Eastern Europe was asked to adopt a new ethos and cultural advancement that required them to replace their norms with Western ideas. These thoughts were not entirely foreign as elites within the regions had already embraced this thinking, but the cultural resonance was weak and did not impact local cultures at the same level. Eastern Europe was caught in a dilemma as security threats were exploited by Western Europe and the real choice was between two great powers that sought control through cultural exploitation.

The European Union originated within the 1958 Treaty of Rome and was firmly established when the Eastern European states broke from Moscow's control in 1989. The former communist countries' path to membership was different from the original members as they were joining an established entity and were in a weaker position to gain mutual sacrifices from existing member states. When the Treaty of Rome was signed, the negotiation included joint openness and compromises that produced benefits to the new members. Since the Soviet Union was perceived to be a threat to Western Europe during the Cold War, this helped facilitate the unity, compromise, and openness that gave birth to the institutions that resulted in the EU. Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Luxemburg were the original Treaty of Rome members and their economic and political cooperation was assisted by the memories of World War II and a common external enemy; the Cold War provided the context for the EU's birth and growth.

The countries that later joined the EU found themselves entering an established organization that could mandate institutional and policy changes in states seeking to become members. The original members could extract concessions from the new members that protected agriculture and commercial enterprises so that when EU expanded, their domestic economy would not suffer negative effects. When communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, the newly independent states desired membership within Western political insti-

tutions but were in a weaker negotiating position and had to adopt the mandated changes.

Hungary and Poland were eager to join Western European political and security institutions and started negotiating for EU membership by 1990. This desire was seen as a way to gain independence and protection from Moscow which, although weak, was still a threat to Eastern European states. The Soviet military maintained bases in Hungary and Czechoslovakia until 1991, while Poland contained 50,000 troops which returned to Russia only in 1993. Eastern Germany had Soviet and then Russian military present until 1994. Poland and Hungary sought to join Western institutions and gain protection without inciting a fight with Moscow. This desire weakened their bargaining leverage with the EU and, as a result, their impotence increased the conditions Brussels could impose. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland understood their fragile position and met in Visegrád, Hungary to coordinate their EU negotiations and gain better terms for membership. The meeting of these three countries, now known as the Visegrád Group, still recurs annually (Brown 2016). This agreement gave Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary slightly improved terms as they could jointly support and create a strategy to allow them to gain membership. Nevertheless, the newly independent states remained in a weak negotiating position and joining Western political and security institutions was their only option.[4]

The Eastern Europeans feared new Russian imperialism and were willing to consent to any Western request that would allow them to be integrated into the security network.[5] The West promised democracy and liberation and asked for reforms that focused on governmental and economic institutions. When Poland, the Czech Republic, and other Eastern European states were incorporated into NATO and the European Union, their societies appeared safe from outside influences that would seek to generate a social transformation in order to destroy their traditions and norms. Their Western integration, however, required not only tweaks to their domestic political and economic institutions, but also sought cultural integration through the adoption of Western norms such as the Copenhagen Criteria (Slobodchikoff 2010). While security institutions worked to protect Eastern Europe from Russian aggression, the idea that their cultural heritage would be likewise protected was a mistake as Western influence has emerged as an unforeseen threat.

In the past few years, I[6] have been privileged to travel to Poland to work with philosophers from the Krąpiec, Wojtyła, Tishner, and Ingarden schools and was surprised to discover that Poles see that the threat to their culture is greater today than when the country was a Soviet satellite. The communist imposition intentionally sought to destroy and rebuild the civilizations it controlled following World War II, but the local population could easily perceive the threat to their traditions. The danger was external and enforced through violence and governmental control over education and media, yet

people could resist it. After the Cold War, the encounter with the West has brought a more destructive and invasive menace that transforms local cultures through postmodernism and materialism. The danger is that the new ethos appears to liberate and is attractive as it relies less on external coercion and exercises indirect control through a philosophical milieu that absorbs and extinguishes local or indigenous cultures. The suspicions aroused by communist control that led to a desire to resist the imposed worldview are not present when the influence promises freedom and pleasure. People may not recognize or simply ignore the risk to their culture and traditions and are open to the forces that bring about the changes desired by the West.

Eastern Europe is caught between an expansive, domineering Russia and a culturally oppressive West that requires these states to conform to its cultural norms. Eastern Europeans have unique cultures that are vulnerable and are threatened with a transformation that would destroy them. The issue is not only language preservation or overt suppression, but a more drastic change in philosophic orientation which begins with an altered metaphysic and understanding of the human person. When a culture is transformed at such a deep level, there are profound consequences that impact the ability to communicate ideas and upon the cultural values groups and individuals have in society. This reorientation facilitates much greater transformations than can be achieved through institutional change and the consequences are rarely linked to the cause.

## EASTERN EUROPE AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment gave Western nations an incentive to reorder society as it promised to create stable and prosperous governments. Democracy and capitalism were posed as universally applicable systems, but liberal institutions did not deliver the expected promises to Eastern European nations. The region was not ethnically homogenous but was divided into multiple civilizations and the monarchical systems provided more stability as they were not tied to a particular ethnic group. Eastern Europe was also hurt as Enlightenment principles eventually generated fascism[7] and communism[8] (Grossman 1980, page 95) and these ideologies and institutions sought to generate a multi-national movement. When these governmental systems emerged in Russia, Italy, and Germany, Eastern European people suffered invasion, war, and wide-spread death.

Liberal ideas originated in England and France and transformed Eastern Europe by creating the intellectual foundation for the move from monarchy to democracy and from mercantilism to capitalism (Kitromilides 1994). While many recognize democracy and capitalism as positive elements to emerge from the Enlightenment, nationalism was a negative component that

created difficulties for states containing multiple nations. When liberal governments emerge, every national entity seeks its own political unit. Democracy works well when there is a clear, identifiable nation-state, but when the population is divided into multiple ethnic groups, this political system will cause problems as minorities will be underrepresented, and ultimately suppressed, in government. Liberal government delegitimized the Austrian-Hungarian Empire as its political system had more than twenty ethnic groups in its population of fifty-one million and the Hungarian portion was never a majority in its own territory (Mazower 1999, chapter 2). Ethnic fragmentation was a problem present throughout Eastern Europe as groups were dispersed and it was difficult for any nation to make clear claims to specific territory. As a result, the Western European ideas created difficult dilemmas in the East as dominant political and cultural entities were destroyed; yet, as nation-states with clear borders were not present, the region was so ethnically divided that there was a significant minority population in every new state.

Nationalism was only one problem that originated in Enlightenment thought; two political projects emerged that employed the same liberal assumptions that led to democracy and applied them to form destructive and oppressive governmental institutions. Communism and fascism were modern political systems that created movements that gained power in Russia and Germany. The emergence of these totalitarian systems was made possible by the same philosophical ideas that led to democracy and capitalism (Horkheimer, Adorno, and Noerr 2002); communism sought to address oppression and inequalities present in early capitalism and fascism used the cultural transformation generated by capitalism to impose a social and political order controlled by a dominant party. These repressive regimes wished to expand their systems geographically and engendered international movements. Eastern Europe did not escape as both fascist and communist followers rose within its borders and again, it was pressured from outside forces to adopt new governmental systems. Eventually, there was a bargain between the Nazis and Soviets that divided Poland and, soon after, war spread between them, catching Eastern Europe in one of the most destructive conflicts in world history. For states in this region, this external domination lasted until 1989 as communism was imposed through Soviet military force. Although liberal thought promised freedom and prosperity, it also created the conditions that led to a devastating war and political oppression that took countless lives.

The Enlightenment philosophic orientation ushered in new political institutions that assured independence and economic stability but had unintended consequences as they also generated nationalism, fascism, and communism. The Enlightenment[9] did create the institutions that brought liberty and affluence to the West while its negative effects were most destructive and unsettling in Eastern Europe.

## THE THREAT TO LOCAL CULTURES

Eastern European states have been isolated from the West since the end of World War II, but the Cold War era is not representative of the cultural connection that existed across Europe prior to this time. Even during the communist era, Eastern Europe was not completely cut off from the West and the United States, but cultural exchanges were more limited. When the Berlin Wall fell and eastern bloc nations were able to reestablish a more integrated relationship with the West, the culture they encountered was fundamentally different as it had changed its philosophic orientation. Although the communist period was arduous, there were intellectual movements, such as Husserl's school, that produced new ethical and social thought that provided tools to help Eastern European intellectuals preserve their culture in the face of communist threats (Gubser 2014). The tools that were successful in working to limit Marxist social engineering, however, were not adequate to face the cultural threats that emerged after 1989. This does not mean that Eastern European people were merely passive to these dangers or lacked agency;[10] many individuals worked to preserve their culture and found ways to resist the foreign ethos,[11] but the newly introduced philosophy was more seductive and difficult to overthrow than the thought imposed in the communist period.

The West sees its values as superior and, therefore, universally beneficial and seeks to proselytize by introducing them to other regions and cultures. The United States and Western European states perceive their principles as objectively good and believe that the world will be better if more countries and regions internalize them and accept this worldview. As new nations accept and integrate this ethos, it is argued that they become more prosperous, peaceful, and stable (Mhbubani and Summers 2016). The contemporary American and Western European systems subordinate culture to economics and define freedom in materialistic terms. Liberty and prosperity are linked to a philosophic orientation that requires national cultures to lose their identity and approach reality through a pragmatic, utilitarian logic. The West thereby uses its transformative power to influence nations and civilizations that fall within its reach.

While its proponents have good intentions as they seek to expand the Western cultural world, this does not guarantee that it will generate the promised results. The goal may be to expand economic opportunities or to increase freedom, but the subsequent geographic expansion of this culture should be considered as a form of modern subjugation or conquest. This assimilation can be considered cultural imperialism[12] as it tends to take place regionally, then continentally, and finally globally and "Hence, from the very beginning, the term 'imperialism' was essentially associated with expansion" (Radojkovićm, 1995 page 80). As Eastern European nations are assimilated

into Western culture, they may be lost forever and this new cultural domination is carried out with the best of intentions.

The West has a reputation for toleration, but the reality is more complex and perilous. If one considers the United States, racism was an inherent element in our national legal system until the 1960s. The indigenous population and its non-white immigrants were denied American citizenship until the 1920s; African-American were not able to vote in the South until 1965. When the United States was expanding across the North American continent and growing in numbers because of the constant influx of European or later Asian immigrants, the national government adopted policies that sought to destroy all indigenous and exogenous cultures, that is, all non-white or non-Anglo-Saxon Protestant groups, and integrate both Native and settler populations into American mainstream society (Roediger 2005). Immigrants were welcomed if they left behind their heritage and assimilated into the national economic life. All foreign or indigenous civilizations that tried to maintain their uniqueness were threats to the dominant economic enterprises and were repressed by the government. In one such policy, for example, American Indian children were forcibly removed from their families and relocated across the country to be placed in government boarding schools that aimed to completely eradicate their native cultures. This program was maintained until the 1950s when there was, finally, some recognition of its injustice (Adams 1995; Hoxie 1984). By this point, most native languages and cultures had been destroyed or significantly impaired and Native peoples were once again forced to integrate into US economic life. Since the United States ideologically supports its mainstream culture, it does not see the consequences to the people whose ways of life are destroyed. In seeking to integrate Eastern European cultures, the West ignores the loss to global diversity and to individual communities when the nations are assimilated into its market-centric ethos. Eastern Europe is faced with a danger similar to the indigenous groups in the Americas as the West seeks to extend its cultural logic into new territory. All unique cultures are perceived as threats to the market expansion sought by elites as well as commercial interests.

The United States and the European Union promote democracy, free trade, and liberalism in their international relations and seek to use this influence to gain additional market share for their domestic firms. Freedom in foreign states is linked to economic openness and this requires partner states to open their culture to Western ideals and influences. States that gain both economic and security guarantees from NATO or other European and American agreements, are more deeply targeted with transformation. The problem is that other cultures and ways of seeing the world are perceived as threats to the Western ideals, so the differences need to be eliminated.

The ability to influence other states through culture and policy attractiveness is an essential element in great power foreign policy. The ideas related

to cultural hegemony originate with an Italian communist, Antonio Gramsci (2003), who corrected Marx by recognizing that a communist revolution was not inevitable, as originally conceived, but it was possible if one could change and control culture. The state does not govern solely through domination but also by constructing consent; this means that it has an interest in conditioning the minds of its citizens so that they accept and respond in ways that correspond to the wellbeing of the state. Today, hegemonic culture is not linked to revolution, but to bringing about similar political transformations that are achieved by changing how people think (Ţichindeleanu 2009, page 136–7). Western nations adopt a similar approach to foreign states as they use their soft power and cultural dominance to change foreign civilizations into mirror images of the United States or EU (Karnoouh 2009, page 87). The two philosophic schools previously mentioned play a vital role in this process and are used to weaken and eventually assimilate the targeted national culture.

## POSITIVISM—"TO KNOW IS SYNONYMOUS WITH TO DESTROY" (GILSON 2000, PAGE 22)

One philosophic era is divided from another because the new period brings either a new orientation or methodology. The two main philosophical approaches employed in the West that threaten Eastern European cultures are positivism and postmodernism. The first relies on Enlightenment principles, specifically the scientific method, while the second addresses language, particularly the ability of words to express meaning. While these two movements contradict one another, they represent the most persuasive Western influences in the region.

Positivism is a modern Enlightenment form of materialism that has its own philosophy of science and relies on measurement and observation (Lancellotti 2015, page xv).[13] This approach is empirical and adopts many elements developed in the Enlightenment which rejected classical realist methods. It has allowed technology and science to advance, but the progression related to matter causes alienation when applied to the human person. When individuals are examined as a materialist entity, there is a reduction that limits reason to that which can be measured empirically. This transition is rooted in the Enlightenment's indifference to classical causality which restricted reason to assessing only what could be placed within its methods.

The Enlightenment paradigm proposed a new methodological approach that changed how causality was understood and attempted to remove all references to classical metaphysics. This intellectual revolution altered the way the West used reason and comprehended causality, thus bringing forth a new philosophical era that was unique in world history. This change had

dramatic consequences for culture as Francis Bacon attempted to construct an empirical, scientific approach to reality. The new focus worked to identify processes that produce change and to explain, and thereby control, how things occurred. As a result, philosophical subjects proposed by classical scholars were perceived as irrelevant and were dismissed from the arena where scientific discourse could take place and this justified modernity's metaphysical reorientation.

The first distinction between Enlightenment and pre-modern thought arises from the limitations placed on causality. Aristotle provided an identification of the four types of causality that are found in scientific inquiry: the formal, final, material, and efficient causes. The Enlightenment rejected this classical approach and thought that scientific legitimacy could only be achieved when the formal and final causes were excluded and the material cause was reduced. Classical and Enlightenment philosophy had only the efficient cause in common and this means that the majority of classical scholarship was rejected as unsound for relying on deficient methodology or reason. In the contemporary West, it is widely understood that Enlightenment thought definitively removed metaphysics from proper inquiry and, as a result, the West has accepted the modern limitations on reason.[14] This approach fundamentally re-orients Western scholarship and places new restrictions on intellectual pursuits.

Positivists adopt the Newtonian revolution which no longer concerns itself with "what something is" but now focuses exclusively on "how something occurs." Scholars no longer focus on a subject's "whatness" but rather on the process through which it is generated. The West lost its metaphysical certainty through this intellectual revolution that alters self-understanding, morality, and value (Del Noce 2014, page 90). This philosophic re-orientation has led to cultural changes that were unexpected by the movement's protagonists.

The reality encountered through the Enlightenment and positivist methods is not able to consider a subject's intrinsic worth and focuses exclusively on use-value. Once "what something is" ceases to be meaningful, we stop asking questions designed to understand a subject on its own terms and concentrate specifically on identifying the subject's usefulness. All reality loses its intrinsic value and the unintentional outcome is that everything is approached through cost-benefit analysis. When this methodology is applied to ethics and individuals, its greatest cultural consequence emerges. The philosophic pathway to reduce individual human beings to objects is opened and ethics loses its organic connection to reality.

The human person becomes detached from traditions, religious ethos, and a narrative that indicated man's place in the cosmos. The Western man has been reduced to a materialistic being that has lost his story and seen "that the explanation of everything is to be found in the grinding, moving cells of the

human body, and not in philosophical speculation" (Calvino 1998, page 132). The Enlightenment and positivist approach rejected the classical, traditional, and religious patrimony and employed a materialistic paradigm that led to confusion and disorientation for modern man. The result was that humanity has lost its intrinsic worth and has been reduced to a use-value most properly accounted for within economic theory. This is not a prospect for happiness, or one that would strengthen human dignity, but would be an assault on the fundamental value of human life, because it reduces the significance each particular person has to society by emphasizing usefulness or economic function above nature or simple existence. The positivist cultural orientation is so pervasive that attempts would be made to apply it to all areas of human life.[15]

The Enlightenment led to cultural destruction as family life, social associations, religion, and moral norms were subjected to a different methodological and philosophical approach that promised freedom and economic prosperity. In the past, society accepted intrinsic moral norms that could not be legitimately violated under any circumstance; today, however, everything is possible as absolute moral standards are passé and have been replaced by a cost-benefit analysis that is applied to assess whether something is good or bad.[16] Actions that were deemed as evil one generation ago are now accepted as legitimate and virtuous. Since moral worth is determined through a calculation that weighs the positive and negative outcomes, once society's values change, so too can something that was once condemned gain legitimacy. The new Enlightenment paradigm has failed to consider its subject's intrinsic significance and has re-evaluated all social elements, including human life, in its methodologically determined analysis.

The positivist approach integrates the Enlightenment cost-benefit and use-value assessment but moves further down this road by adopting a secular and atheistic understanding of reality. The Enlightenment was deistic and believed in a God that had left the universe after creating it and all its physical, materialistic laws. Positivism rejects all theistic claims and has accepted the death of God. The Enlightenment can be distinguished from contemporary positivism because it held the existence of physical laws that, since they were given and present within reality, could be discovered and identified. The most important was that since there is a God, governmental behavior should be limited so that the human freedom present and recognized in reality would not be violated. A fundamental difference between Enlightenment and positivist thought is that the norms that were recognized in a theistic setting are subject to re-evaluation and rejection as secularism becomes dominant. Positivism is atheistic and, therefore, the danger is that there is no longer any entity that can limit the state in its relationship with individuals, families, and groups. The rejection of God provides the justification for a vast growth in governmental power. Positivism is a Western cultu-

ral form that has the potential to bring drastic changes to Eastern European nations.

## THE LINGUISTIC TURN

Once reason was redefined and Western culture reoriented through a metaphysic that embraced a materialism with, ironically,[17] a limited capacity to approach the material world, it became clear that the dominant philosophic orientation was problematic. As a result, philosophy entered a new phase that is often called postmodernity because it refers to the criticism that emerged to challenge and displace Enlightenment thought.[18] This movement recognized that modern culture and philosophy have a problematic relationship with reality.[19] Once difficulties emerge with the "scientific" and "objective" approach to reality, one response was to assume that actual knowledge of a subject was impossible and it changed its focus from the real world to language. By focusing on language, it questions whether words have a stable content value or are able to express meaning. Consequently, postmodern thought has become even further removed from reality as it sought to address whether philosophy is even possible. While there are several competing philosophic schools that offer opposing claims to most perfectly represent postmodern thought, the one consistency between them is a common doubt concerning the relationship between words and reality. Once this connection is questioned, all the great works of Western civilization lose their meaning and become pointless. This path ends in the destruction of all thought and of meaning itself. Richard Rorty (1992) calls this new philosophical orientation the linguistic turn as it reveals a pathos, a disfigurement of the Western heart and a loss of meaning, and reveals a new nihilism. This cultural emptiness is a second characteristic of Western societies that has entered Eastern Europe[20] and is a grave threat to the nations it reaches.

The postmodern cultural manifestation has affected Western language by introducing new concepts and by removing the meaning of words. This movement is inherently secular and has altered the West's religious vocabulary by changing the meaning of words that have a theological connotation. Ironically, it has also aided the rise of fundamentalism; its emergence, in fact, was linked to the historical critical method which was an attempt by scholars to apply the scientific method's claims to religious literature. This growth has been accelerated by Western skepticism concerning the connection between language and reality. The linguistic turn has helped to secularize sacred language and further removed reason from discourse. Walker Percy has written extensively on the effect that the linguistic turn has had in changing the religious language content by dispossessing words of their meaning (1975, 1987).

> "Because the words no longer signify."
> "Why is that?"
> "Because the words have been deprived of their meaning." (Percy 1987, page 118)

Religious traditions are threatened as it has become almost impossible to communicate their heritage through ordinary language to the wider public (Kupczak 2013). This cultural transition is particularly intimidating to states where religion is an integral part of daily life such as the Orthodox and Catholic states in Eastern Europe.[21] The linguistic turn is not only dangerous as it spreads into new states; it has left a destructive legacy where it originated.

Once words lose their meaning the impact is not limited to destroying religion in society. This also leads to a weakness where its own traditions and culture are despised within the West. Foucault and Derrida are two leading proponents who provided the foundation for postmodern thought to emerge and become a dominant Western approach to reality. A common characteristic within their writing is that Western traditions and classical thought are merely the institutionalization of power within society and have no legitimacy or special claim. While it may seem irrational for Western Europe and the United States to promote scholars that destroy their intellectual heritage, it is important to identify what remains after this cultural disintegration. The cultural elements that survive this transformation are linked to pragmatism, relativism, economic thought, and nihilism. As the linguistic turn expands into more cultures, national traditions are integrated into the dominant Western ethos because individual no longer see what is intrinsically good and worth preserving in their tradition or heritage.

While this philosophy emerges within Western Europe, particularly France and the United States, it has led to a civilizational failure that may signal hegemonic decline. The Western world became dominant through Enlightenment social thought as capitalism and democracy provided the structure for global political and economic advancement. Fordism was an economic application of this idea that allowed US manufacturing to become a world leader. When the Enlightenment was rejected and postmodernity emerged, the West also discarded the culture that made it a global power. Economic deterioration is normally preceded by cultural crisis and the 1968 uprisings and the opposition to the Vietnam War were symptoms of a much deeper crisis that emerged from the linguistic turn, which was a crisis of meaning. The West is now passing onto the world the forces that destroyed its own culture—it is ironic because the cultural assumptions that make capitalism and democracy possible, elements that the EU and the United States like to promote, are now rejected in the places where they originated. There has not been a proper intellectual accounting to examine the consequences

postmodern ethos will have for democratic institutions. Contemporary liberal governments originated and are validated and confirmed by Enlightenment thought; what will the passage to a new philosophic era mean for present-day governments when the cultural ethos that gave them birth no longer exists?[22] Democratic governments will function differently in the postmodern era, but it is still too early to know how this transformation will manifest itself.

Ironically, the West continues to promote democracy when the cultural ethos that provides the foundations for liberal institutions is no longer present. Western Europe and the United States developed more rapidly than other nation-states as they established a society that employed the political and economic systems advanced by the Enlightenment. It is very unlikely that the West will be able to preserve its global dominance as the cultural ethos that made it great perishes and postmodernity replaces it.

## HOW WESTERN CULTURE IS MANIFEST IN EASTERN EUROPE

The West's philosophical orientation is not presented directly or in its entirety, but is filtered through the media, literature, and other works that come from the United States and Western Europe. The mass media, by presenting a specific lifestyle and ethos, attracts people and entices them to embrace new norms. Miroljub Radojkovićm (1995, page 82) shows that this becomes a 'pulling force' that "takes place without the use of force, as some kind of 'unbearable lightness of enslaving.'" Pleasure functions as a subjugating force that leads to a transformation where nations forfeit their traditions and replace them with Western materialism. These conventions promise liberty and prosperity through a new cultural orientation that requires the recipients to re-evaluate and eventually reject their traditions. The hegemonic culture works to transform the way people think and gain the desired political outcome by "modernizing" a nation's character (Babias 2009, page 256–7).[23] Consumerism, individualism, and postmodernity/secularism are three consistent elements in Western culture that have had a powerful effect on the Eastern European ethos.

## CONSUMERISM

The West prioritizes economic freedom and sees happiness and fulfillment linked to material wealth.[24] As this idea spreads through the media into popular culture, individuals who come from poor states are deeply impacted by this message and order their life in a way that will advance their earning potential (Karnoouh 2009, page 92). One's entire life is ordered around generating enough income to maintain consumption and lifestyle as though these were the key to happiness. While financial responsibility is positive, pursuing

wealth has grown so significantly that it has become an end in itself. Happiness is linked to material possessions and traditional virtues, such as sacrificing for the common good or family life, fade until they are replaced with a new ethic that employs relativistic thinking. One's success is determined not by what they learn or accomplish, but by what they consume.

Individuals chose their life work not from the contribution they can make to their community or by examining what makes them happy, rather vocations are selected for the earning potential they generate. One transition is, for example, the decline in the humanities as a college major as students choose paths that can be more readily transformed into income-generating careers. Eastern Europe students have traditionally focused on philosophy, literature, classical music, and the arts in larger numbers and are normally more advanced than the West in these areas.[25] As consumerism spreads, it leaves behind a more shallow culture in which education is reduced to mastering marketable techniques. The intellectual artistic heritage of Eastern Europe may be one victim of this new mentality, but it is not the most damaging.

A second front concerns the family as consumerism challenges the traditional values and roles assigned to spouses and the generation of life. It is a new phenomenon that one's career takes precedence over the household and individuals are less likely to make sacrifices required for a stable family life. Some workers avoid marriage altogether or get married later in life and, when they do commit to marriage, have fewer children and this has lowered the birth rates in Eastern Europe to historic levels (Billingsley 2009; Kohler et al. 2002; Sobotka 2003). People choose vacations and tablets over children. Inter-generational relations are also weakened as young educated individuals are more likely to move to countries with higher wages, thus leaving behind their homes, families, and often times their upbringing, and become transient populations without roots in their new home. The family's social esteem declines as financial responsibility is more valued and traditional domestic responsibilities regress. Ironically, the disintegration of extended family units was one of the main ways in which colonial powers such as the United States, Britain, and France achieved the destruction of indigenous communities, and thus cultures, in the United States and in their respective colonial possessions. Cut from their large and stable circle of kin and relatives, young men and women were taught to decry their uncivilized past and become assimilated, independent, and economically self-sufficient citizens. Breaking up the family has always been one of the main goals of the colonizer because it is through blood ties that cultural norms, traditions, and language are passed on; once the cohesion of this unit is compromised, the transmission of one's worldview is seriously jeopardized (Adams 1995; Carnoy 1974; Clignet, Remi, and Foster 1964; Deloria and Lytle 1983; Gann and Duignan 1970; Haebich 2000; Moses 2004).

## INDIVIDUALISM

The liberal heritage defines freedom by focusing on the relationship between the government and the individual. This philosophical orientation sees freedom linked to individual license which is institutionalized by placing normative bounds on governmental action. The family, household, and other social organizations become potential threats to liberty; therefore, the government steps in to weaken these groups and to protect individuals from being bound by them. Thus, the relationship between the individual and the government needs no intermediary. Three consequences emerge in Eastern European societies from this liberal orientation: (i) other social groups have diminishing importance, (ii) morality is redefined, and (iii) state power expands.

Freedom is defined in terms that limit the state's control over the individual and this weakens other social organizations and groups. Families, religious leaders and organizations, unions, and small social or political groups all become less influential. While their existence is not threatened in the liberal environment, the meaning these associations contribute to the political discourse is dismissed as inconsequential. At the same time, multinational economic interests have gained power and are better equipped to impact public policy. Also, new groups, such as NGOs, gain prominence as they are able to express their platforms in the rights language that adopts the Western cultural paradigm. Older institutions employing traditional logic are vulnerable as their position is targeted by new groups whose message coincides with the new dominant culture. The state is required to intervene to protect the individual from these other social groups when they interfere with personal freedom. However, the organizations that work to protect individuals from the government lose legitimacy and, consequently, become weak and less persuasive. The institutions working to protect families, unions, religious organizations, or other groups are intellectually dismissed because they cannot offer individuals the same freedoms as those provided by the government. When liberty is represented as license, only the government can sanction and secure individual acts. Other actors that employ a different definition of freedom are social disadvantaged and lose their importance over time. The liberal philosophical orientation creates winners and losers when it is adopted in the public square and small groups and families are preordained to lose influence and be marginalized.

The second major change sees moral discourse removed from its traditional context and articulated in rights language. Absolute moral norms are dismissed as antiquated and ethics rejects traditional intrinsic boundaries as all behavior is examined in a market-based framework that weighs positive and negative outcomes. Individual action is no longer recognized as having consequences on the entire society and the context for evaluating behavior changes. Good and evil are no longer appropriate to make moral judgments

and traditional ethos becomes irrelevant. In theory, once liberalism has transformed the ethical norms then everything is potentially permitted as long as there is some moral accounting that can justify the action. Pragmatism and cost-benefit analysis are applied to potential moral problems and the socially dominant calculus where actions are justified changes with time. Ethics becomes relative as it embraces a market mentality where the moral quality of an action depends on whether it produces more positive than negative consequences. In this context, the end literally justifies the means. Morality is removed from its context and, perhaps, this is the greatest transformation liberal reforms have brought to society.

Public discourse regarding morality is expressed in rights language. Once a right is legitimatized by state authority, it becomes a license. As a result, traditional moral norms can be violated and, when the moral accounting changes, things that were once considered immoral gain governmental protection. Popular discourse will extend the areas where the new normative approach is applied and the editorial pages will constantly re-apply this methodology to create and defend new ethical values. To provide its citizens the freedom to act according to the revised norms, the state will come between other social groups, such as the family, to guarantee that other institutions do not obstruct personal choice. Once a right is established, no one in society may prevent another from choosing the new legitimized option.

The new cultural norms provide incentives to individuals to judge social policy as it affects them individually and the grounds for solidarity are reduced.[26] As individualism grows and a people loses its traditions, liberal moral norms are engrained in thinking and citizens are less likely to come together to make sacrifices for the vulnerable or voiceless in society. As men and women focus more on themselves and less on their family or society, these associations have an even weaker cultural value. Self-regarding calculations guide behavior, so the social areas where people would traditionally come together to bring change deteriorate with time. Liberalism decreases solidarity as individual thoughts correspond to the new norms and governmental power grows.

When other groups lose their ability to influence culture, the state gains more control and, ironically, becomes much more powerful than the governmental structures it displaced. The liberal marketing campaign stresses that freedom is achieved by limiting the ability of government to act, but in reality, once the other actors are removed, there is no ability to block the state from enacting policies that directly challenge norms. The liberal state is empowered to push through more rules because the actors who would oppose them have been weakened and de-legitimized as trying to obstruct liberty. Although liberal apologists present democracy as the best way to limit governmental power, the resultant state has more authority and influence. The other social actors seeking to limit state institutions are undermined and

discredited. Individualism introduces social parameters that are biased so that the central administration becomes the protector of freedom but in taking this step, it eliminates the actors that would otherwise limit government and maintain other authority structures within the social order.

## SECULARISM AND POSTMODERNITY—"IF GOD IS DEAD, THEN EVERYTHING IS LAWFUL."

The dominant American and Western European culture is atheistic and works to legitimize secularism as the only objective, neutral position in society. This idea was also present throughout the communist era, but it was manifested in a different cultural background and was antagonistic rather than liberating. Although the West was once theistic, the philosophical changes ushered in by the Enlightenment have set its societies on a path that eventually led to the rejection of God and the emergence of a postmodern and post-Christian culture. In Eastern Europe, the societies[27] with strong religious norms are exposed to Western principles that are secular and through which the exported culture propagates its claims against creeds and beliefs. The popular culture originating in the United States or EU embeds a secular ethos that challenges the Catholic or Orthodox social presence (Stawrowski 2013). The separation of church and state is a Western tradition, but this idea has been modified in recent decades to become more aggressive. The United States and EU consider secularism to be religiously neutral, but this reveals a very specific philosophical orientation and is neither objective nor unbiased. The West has adopted one perspective but even this requires a particular cosmology, one that is not impartial or widely accepted philosophically.

The final cultural force that threatens Eastern Europe is the most destructive because it targets traditions, religions, and language. Postmodernity is spread through technology and the media and brings the linguistic turn into societies influenced by Western culture. As language is detached from reality, it becomes impossible to make any definitive claims and the very idea of truth is dismissed. The discourse shifts and culture is pressured to accept the claims that reject the ability to make authoritative statements based on conventional sources. If religious and traditional associations' public statements lose credibility because they are no longer accepted as objective and thus valid, their place in society is reduced and secularist voices have the only legitimate claims on government policy. This endows the government the authority to reject religious norms and to pass laws that violate the majority's conscience. States exposed to Western culture have problems maintaining their religious traditions and, as a consequence, this contact causes a growing population to reject any truth claims. The state is pressured to secularize and

cut ties to organized religion even when a clear majority practices a particular faith.

Secular materialism is a more powerful cultural force within Eastern Europe than is commonly recognized because the Catholic and Orthodox nations only maintained their religious practices with difficulty during the communist era and, as a result, spiritual formation was much weaker. The local populations would have fewer intellectual resources to turn to if they would wish to maintain their religion. Atheistic cultural norms were more arduous and difficult to resist because the local population within the region lacked the intellectual training that showed their fallacies and inconsistencies. Thereby, Western secularism worked to privilege atheistic voices within Eastern European societies and weakened the competence of traditional or religious actors.[28]

The West is not immune to the social forces unleashed through postmodernity and the long-term changes may be more destructive to its civilization than is commonly recognized. There is no consensus concerning the political transformations it will bring, but, as with all philosophical shifts, it will generate a change to political institutions and behavior. Democracy and capitalism were born in Enlightenment thought and with a new philosophical foundation these institutions are likely to experience a transformation that will weaken the features that work to limit governmental power. The intellectual climate that gave them birth has ceased to exist as the cultural norms liberalism introduced are altered or no longer present. One possible change is that governments will no longer be bound by the words expressed in their constitutions, as these documents create norms that limit behavior. If words have lost their meaning, how can governments restrict their policies and acts to abide by them? It is easier to re-define the limiting words or dismiss them entirely. Perhaps the massive collection of personal data and the end of individual privacy that takes place in the United States and violates the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution are a sign that postmodern governments will not be bound in any meaningful manner. If this is the case, then the premise upon which liberal states are founded is not valid in a postmodern state. This cultural change may endanger the traditional forms of democracy. If postmodernity alters the way norms operate within liberal institutions, this means that leaders and officials will be able to justify almost any activity that can be hidden from the general public. It is reasonable to assume that more Western governments will institutionalize hypocrisy and be regularly caught in scandals as they authorize actions that directly contradict their constitutions. The growth in secularism will ultimately weaken European and American soft power and strengthen those voices, such as Moscow and Beijing, who offer alternative visions. Secularism undermines society, justifies hypocrisy, and simultaneously damages the West's global image.

## THE TECHNOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION

A primary focus for Eastern Europeans is to discover what cultural elements are likely to survive the Western-led transformation. Capitalism and democracy are hailed as world treasures that were given to the world through the Enlightenment, but the philosophical base from which these liberal institutions emerged is no longer present. Consequently, the postmodern liberal institutions will be different in that they will not be bound by constitutional language as the defining words will be subject to change and have no fixed meaning. Classical liberalism was culturally destructive prior to the linguistic turn and would have simply integrated new civilizations into its materialistic ethos. These nations would have access to new commodities in return for their heritage as "in the twentieth century factory space has been purchased by melting down all culture values into a giant crucible" (Horkheimer, Adorno, and Noerr 2002, page IV). The post-Enlightenment West continues to integrate and absorb new civilizations and the secular-materialism reduces all reality into an entity that can be entered into a mathematical formula. The surviving ethos, if it can be called a heritage, is the dominance of materialistic thinking where "the past is preserved as the destruction of the past" (Horkheimer, Adorno, and Noerr 2002, pages XIV–XV). The West's patrimony is a globalized culture that expands geographically and destroys all traditional ways of life it encounters for the sake of homogeneity. Within this milieu, authentic culture cannot be seen and ceases to have meaning.

Western civilization is defended in economic terms and since culture is something that cannot easily be quantified or measured, it is not seen and therefore not valued. The remaining sub-cultures are marginalized, ignored, and oppressed. For example, in his works defending globalization, Jagdish Bhagwati (2004, 2007) mainly considers trade and provides no understanding of how the world culture threatens local customs. He focuses his criticism on the anti-capitalist, anti-globalization, anti-corporation, and ideological movements but is not even conscious of the threat the dominant Western ethos has on other nations or indigenous groups. Bhagwati defends globalization from political and ideological groups but does not perceive the threat to local cultures and thus does not address this issue. The cultural ethos is a particular challenge to Eastern Europe (Karnoouh 2009, page 114) as the confrontation with a more technically advanced culture, and therefore, a superior one, is either to submit and join or perish.

> It [the Western, globalized culture] ghettoizes the diverse resources of truly human cultures, displacing them with a profit-driven, homogenized world-culture that does not arise from the profound inner reservoirs of the human spirit, but is instead "created" and propagated by all the powers of machines, micro-technology, and invisible waves conveyed by satellites. The new culture

> is powerful, it is super-rich, it is relentless and omni-present. (O'Brien 2009; page 153)

Eastern European civilizations and traditions are likely to be assimilated and become integrated in the lifeless Western culture. Once this transformation occurs, economic language and a technocratic[29] government that is democratic, but different from past liberal governments, will emerge.

A materialist civilization emphasizes empirical methods over classical learning and mastering techniques becomes the way individuals advance and gain power.[30] Subsequently, government changes and a nation's people gain less control over state policies as technocrats apply the new economic models and are more detached from their cultural setting. Efficiency and technical prowess are privileged politically and specific policies are mandated by experts that overpower traditional approaches. This transition results in a new form of control, similar to Marxism, where decisions made by few elites are imposed on the nation and, as Gilson wrote, "In every land and in all countries, the people wait with fear and trembling for the powerful of the world to decide their lot for them. . . . With growing impatience, they await the arrival of the master who will impose on them all forms of slavery, starting with the worst and most degrading of all—that of the mind" (2000, page 34). Technical control is extended over the population; this is modern "democratic" government. A contemporary nation-state surrenders its heritage and treasures to the globalized culture and acquiesces to the secular ethos that absorbs and assimilates people falling under its rule.

## LOST ANTHROPOLOGY

As ancient certainties are discarded and a materialistic culture arises, one consequence is that the human person loses his anchor to reality and becomes disoriented in his self-understanding and worth. The claim of the West was to secure individuals by increasing their economic well-being and to give them political and social freedoms. Although commodities have grown numerically and there is more commercial choice, the cultural destruction has led to an anthropological confusion. Western philosophy does not adequately account for the human person and, if the basic social unit is ineffectively understood, the promises and expectations will not be reached. When an ideological system has problematic assumptions regarding the human person, it will be wrong and never generate the anticipated results. A deeper problem is that man is unable to make sense of life or to find meaning; the West is suffering a new nihilism, related to a defective anthropology. "But I know that people in the West . . . tend not to admit that humanity is in a state of crisis and that therefore their own humanity is in a state of crisis too. Whenever I have a chance to talk to Westerners, I try to raise this matter" (Havel 1990, page

168). When individuals have no inherent value and a utilitarian logic emerges, desire is extinguished and people must endure life with purposelessness. When the human person is reduced to a mechanism, individual characteristics are evaluated through selfish calculations and this logic leads to learned meaninglessness. "Confounding the dignity of man with mere usefulness arises from a conceptual confusion that in turn may be traced back to the contemporary nihilism transmitted on many an academic campus and many an analytic couch. . . . Nihilism does not contend that there is nothing, but it states that everything is meaningless" (Frankl 2006, page 152). Consumerism and hedonism become responses to the Western anthropological crisis and, ironically, they are presented through the media and popular culture as something attractive.

If Eastern Europe is unable to preserve its culture, it may be headed to an existential crisis similar to the one in the West. The forces that accelerate civilizational decline have never been better marketed. Although technology has brought many good things, when we apply methods that work so well in the natural sciences to the human person, this is reduced to mere matter and is unable to understand or recognize its inherent dignity. It is unlikely that the Western cultural influences will lead to a different outcome, although they will increase misery in nations that accept their norms.

## THE CULTURAL THREAT TODAY

In the difficult decades following World War II, Eastern European states suffered a violent occupation where Soviet cultural control was implemented through violence and coercion. The resultant national distress compelled those trapped in its nets to recognize the system's injustice and this perception strengthened nations to resist this domination. People were able to respond by cooperating passively and obeying the imposed norms without accepting them internally. While totalitarian systems sought to control thought and to firmly establish new social norms, their reliance on brutality and savagery limited their effectiveness and ultimately led to their failure.

Today, the new threat to local culture again wishes to impose a new mentality on the recipient societies but this effort is not achieved through violent coercion: it is done through social engineering that is able to dominate a population through pleasure. The new menace does not compel through external force, but seeks interior change through amusement and self-satisfaction. This occurs through marketing, abundant consumer goods, and vacation packages that open the world to travelers and link freedom to material abundance. A new moral system grants sexual license and delegitimizes any authority that does not employ a relativist logic. The norms are consolidated through popular music and the mass media which glorify indi-

vidualism and selfishness. Acquiescence to the global ethos does not take place through repression or threat, but from promising to satisfy the lowest human desires if one only consents to the new reasoning and gives up the uniqueness of their culture and traditions. It is very difficult for the young to resist and perhaps the greatest social revolution to emerge in Eastern Europe will occur not through guns or violence, but through pleasure. What indigenous cultures can remain unchanged when faced with an external threat that promises to satisfy modern aspirations and appeals to the desire for immediate satisfaction?

The threat to Eastern European national cultures is greater today than when it suffered Soviet dominion and de facto occupation during the Cold War. While the communists used public institutions and threats to spread their beliefs, the indoctrinated population recognized this as a foreign imposition. Today, the West has a greater technological proficiency and a more advanced economy and promises freedom and prosperity to nations that adopt its ethos. It too seeks to transform the Eastern European nations but it relies on a subtle marketing campaign that makes positive claims and indirectly attacks religious and traditional norms. The danger is that the imposed ideas are seductive and the affected nations have a greater difficulty in recognizing the long-term consequences that this proselytization brings. The transformation is achieved through a more advanced social engineering that reduces inter-personal communication and introduces a new philosophic orientation. The "liberation" will come if the targeted states only give up their culture and replace it with a mechanical approach to reality where truth claims no longer exist. The materialist subjectivity would destroy and marginalize local cultures that try to resist the Western character (Sardar 1997). If this is not challenged, Eastern European nations will become just like the West and lose their cultural bearings.

Western civilization is in retraction or actual hegemonic decline, yet it still presents an attractive message that has brought about destructive forces within its own states. If this decline is linked to the culture, then the nations that adopt the Western ethos will also face a decline in the future. When words are no longer able to communicate meaning and secularism becomes the only legitimate religious claim, there is nothing to resist governmental power and the promised freedom actually decreases. Also, once the transcendent is destroyed as a possibility and religion is something people need to be freed from, the consequence is a new, destructive emptiness. Are religion and its rules oppressive? If so, will people still love their nation, government, or culture? A civilization requires its members to make sacrifices for it to survive; if nihilism prevails, why would anyone willingly surrender anything to make the state stronger? The population will suffer disillusionment and meaninglessness and this will ultimately destroy families, increase drug abuse and violence, and see workers reduced to a commodity. Individuals

who are disabled, inconvenient, or unable to make a substantial contribution to the economy will lose their dignity and worth. If this comes to pass, the West's cultural pressure will not only destroy culture but sacrifice something greater; hope may be the ultimate victim.

## NOTES

1. Our work does not intend to contribute to the contestation over the definition of Eastern Europe. We define Eastern Europe as the former Soviet bloc in Europe including the Balkans but excluding all other former Soviet States. These states are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

2. Our book employs Krober and Kluckhohn's (1952) definition of culture which "consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts: the essential core of human culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas especially their attached values; cultural systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action" (357).

3. There are important implications to this transformation that are outside the paragraph's scope. However, if Western cultural assumptions do not correspond to reality, then their introduction may reduce freedom globally. It is possible that freedom may be reduced through the attempt to expand it.

4. In some cases, states were so eager to join the EU that they did not give opponents a platform to make their voice heard. For example, Croatia sought to include dissenters when it sought NATO membership, but the entire society was socialized to accept EU membership and opponents were never given a chance to speak (Andrlić et al. 2012).

5. There are many published works examining the tradeoff Eastern European states made with the West to gain security. James Morrow (1993) provides an international relations theoretical explanation while Stefania Panebianco shows that the EU wishes to effect changes within Eastern Europe to strengthen Western security. Merje Kuus (2002) looks in depth at Estonia to examine the security trade off and to show that Estonians have adopted Western security discourse. Finally, David Laitin (2002) shows that Eastern European elites have stronger incentives to "coordinate-culturally" with the West than other European or American cultural leaders.

6. G. Doug Davis.

7. Hannah Arendt (1973) shows how fascism emerged as a consequence of Enlightenment thought. A liberal, capitalist society creates a mass culture that works to isolate individuals who thereby find their identity in the totalitarian movements that come to dominate society. Arendt links economic thought, which is one outcome of Enlightenment thought, to the social control typical in totalitarian societies: "[economics] could achieve a scientific character only when men had become social beings and unanimously followed certain patterns of behavior, so that those who did not keep the rules could be considered to be asocial or abnormal" (1998, page 194). Ironically, economics assumes a homogenous, dominant culture that will serve as the proper model to be followed and one that will seek to destroy all behavior that does not fit this cultural mode. Moss (2004) shows how fascism was generated as an intellectual reaction to British Enlightenment thought.

8. Hannah Arendt (1953 and 2002) shows that the totalitarianism linked to Marxist thought has its roots in the first economists and that Marx simply took the assumptions to their logical end. Also, Timothy Snyder (2010, page 156) indicates that Hitler and Stalin employed a Darwinian transformation to Enlightenment principles and, therefore, Nazism and Soviet Communism are rooted in Enlightenment thought.

9. It was the Enlightenment that defined Eastern Europe as other than the West and its role extends beyond the institutional legacy. Wolff (1994) provides the best account of this, but brief narratives are also offered by Wydra (2008) and Koschmal (2008).

10. There are two historical cases that illustrate the threat to Eastern European cultures: the indigenous and immigrant groups in North America. The targeted groups maintained agency in the face of an oppressive culture but were, nevertheless, absorbed into the larger society. It is not enough to know that one's culture is being attacked to preserve it. Native Americans understood that the US government and society sought to destroy their culture and although they fought to preserve it, their attempt was unsuccessful. Awareness and agency may not be enough to preserve a culture.

11. Not everyone who opposed the negative elements of Western culture did this to preserve local ways-of-life. There were many former communists who opposed European and American influences and advanced nationalist political goals that were also destructive of culture and politicized it (Verdery 1996).

12. We employ John Tomlinson's (2012) definition of cultural imperialism which is an "exercise of domination in cultural relationships in which the values, practices, and meanings of a powerful foreign culture are imposed upon one or more native cultures" (371).

13. Marxism constitutes one branch of positivism so that during the communist period there were multiple schools employing this thought in the region. Eastern Europe gave birth to several Marxist schools prior to World War II and more during the Cold War (Aleksandrowicz 1992; Donskis 2002; Golan 1976; Laszlo 1964, 1967; Lobkowicz 1961; Mineva and Raycheva 2001). The main intellectual divisions in these groups were between positivist and Hegelian scholars, but the vast majority of communist intellectuals were positivists (Skolimowski 1965). The Marxist versions are fundamentally different from the schools in the West which were profoundly influenced by Karl Popper's rejection of the Vienna philosophy of science school. The Western version has more in common with the analytic philosophy developed by Bertrand Russell.

14. This book intends to assess the consequences to philosophic anthropology and cultural metaphysics rather than addressing the problem that all causality is not found in the efficient or material cause.

15. For example, see Gary Becker's *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior* (1978).

16. Consequentialism and proportionalism are the two philosophic terms given to these cost-benefit moral approaches.

17. The irony is that Enlightenment thought appears to be scientific and, therefore, to know the world better, but once its methodology is adopted actual reality plays a smaller part in analysis. A subject's actual properties need to be "proved" empirically rather than observed or deduced and, again, the focus has shifted from understanding "what something is" to "how an event takes place." In classical philosophy, identifying a subject's nature needs to precede knowledge of usefulness and proper knowledge of reality needs to exist before one can even know what to do. Once a subject's "whatness" is dismissed, then it becomes more difficult to discern a "how" linked to it.

18. Edmund Husserl (1970) in the *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* recognized that the West's focus on the scientific method and its emphasis on materialism and empiricism betrayed a profound skepticism that weakened the role of the sciences. The scientific method's cultural prominence does not show that we know reality better but that we are not able to understand it at all. Although Husserl did not directly predict the linguistic turn, his writings show how positivism degenerates into a system that would further challenge the ability to know the real world. If the scientific method does not work, this generates skepticism that nothing will.

19. While postmodern scholars are quick to point out problems regarding the Enlightenment's conception of causality and the way it connects thought to reality, they do not seek to correct these defects but use them to justify an even more reductive method that aggravates the very problems they identify and criticize. Their response is to politicize philosophy which moves it even further away from reality. As philosophy has "advanced" and new post-Enlightenment schools have emerged, the discipline has grown more problematic as its weaknesses have grown rather than been mitigated.

20. Kazimierz Twardowski founded the Lvov-Warsaw Polish school of analytic philosophy but this school was fundamentally different from the versions that emerged in England and the United States as it included realist assumptions and linked language to truth (Rieser 1960). In

the communist period, there was also a Polish school of analytic-linguistic Marxism that was tolerated after 1958 and sought to apply Marxist thought to semantic problems (Skolimowski 1965).

21. This is not to claim that all Eastern European countries have strong religious characters. This element varies not only across countries but also within them.

22. One likely outcome is that the norms that restricted government activity in previous eras will no longer prevent regimes from violating their constitutions. Since the focus is on language and words no longer have a fixed meaning, a government can easily violate the rules that limit their behavior and hypocrisy will become more common. The other outcome is that nations that internalize the postmodern linguistic relativism will lose international legitimacy as their duplicitous behavior is more likely to be discovered.

23. Two classic works that examine the process of social engineering are Huxley's *Brave New World Revisited* (1958) and Ross's *Social Control: A Survey of the Foundations of Order* (1901).

24. Adam Smith (2007) admits in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* that consumerism or the relentless pursuit of wealth may bring misery and the very benefit society accrues comes at the cost of individual unhappiness. Smith shows that neither the attempt to gain wealth nor the acquiring of it brings true happiness (see also Rasmussen 2006).

25. This information comes from philosophy and humanities departments and faculty at Eastern European universities but there is little published data on the numbers or quality of education. Numerous journal articles examine educational policies (Dobbins and Knill 2009; Sabloff 1998) or consider changes in individual countries (Eisemon et al. 1995; Kwiek 2012, 2014). One additional reason for this preference for the humanities is that most Eastern European states follow the German system and do not offer degrees in business or management. This is a partial reason for having higher enrollments in these fields.

26. Marci Shore (2013) describes a talk given by Polish intellectual Sławomir Sierakowski after Václav Havel's death in which he asked the audience to compare the repressive communist system to contemporary democracies and how "instrumental reason . . . leads to cynicism" (357). He was pained that in post-communist Poland "there was no common set of values that proved stronger than each person's private interests" (357) and concluded that everyone had made compromises with the new system like Havel's greengrocer.

27. Religious norms vary not only across regional states, as for example, religious practice is weaker in the Czech Republic than in Slovakia, but this variation also exists within countries as well. For example, eastern Hungary is less religious than its central or western regions.

28. Ryszard Legutko (2016) shows that within Poland the former communists gained privileged governmental positions following the 1989 transition as groups such as Solidarity that ushered in the change were disadvantaged within the emergent society. His work shows that the democratic transformation and opening to the EU created the conditions that kept the communists in power and actually adopted many practices typically associated with totalitarian governments. Legutko's work takes a different approach, but makes the same arguments found in this chapter.

29. Eastern Europe also faced a technocratic logic under the communist period but it was more intimidating than its Western manifestation.

30. It is the new liberalism that destroys classical liberal education.

*Chapter Three*

# Russian Smart Power in Eastern Europe

> "Surely, we need to make an even greater effort to project an objective image of our country and our civilization abroad, enriched by the lofty achievements of human thought and spirit."[1]
> —Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

> "In my opinion, Russia is relatively on a par with its major geopolitical rivals, as far as 'hard power' is concerned: we have the military, resources and economic power. As for 'soft power,' unfortunately, I believe this parity has been significantly impaired."[2]
> —Konstantin Kosachev, Head of Rossotrudnichestvo

In November 1989, the world watched events unfold in Berlin. Hundreds of protesters climbed the Berlin Wall, while many chipped away at the barrier. Others gathered at the checkpoints, demanding to be let through into West Berlin. Upon passing through checkpoints, West Germans met the East Germans with flowers and champagne. With this festive atmosphere, the Cold War ended without hostility. Within a few months, much of Eastern Europe began the transition from Soviet satellite states to free market democracies.

While the suddenness of the events that changed Eastern Europe took many Western policy makers by surprise, they were quick to tout the triumph of Western ideology over communism. The Western political ethos had overtaken the Soviet dogma, and was moving eastward. Western influence was reaching its zenith as more and more of the Eastern European countries that had been Soviet satellite states turned their backs on the Soviet Union and turned towards liberal democracy.

While Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev allowed Eastern Europe to leave Moscow's orbit, he battled to keep the Soviet Union together. Facing a

tug-of-war between reformers demanding drastic changes and hard-liners who believed that the Soviet Union needed to quickly roll back the changes of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Gorbachev found himself in a very precarious position. Many of the Soviet republics were actively calling for their freedom from the Soviet Union, and in a last effort to prevent the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev developed the New Union Treaty, which replaced the original Treaty on the Creation of the USSR and created a confederation of Soviet republics. The Soviet Union would still be responsible for foreign policy and the military, but most of the domestic policy-making decisions would be made by the republics. Six of the republics refused to be a party to the New Union treaty, while nine of the republics agreed to hold a referendum on the New Union Treaty.[3] In the nine republics in which a referendum was held, over 70 percent of the public voted in favor of the New Union Treaty. The New Union Treaty referendum passed and this was hailed as a great success for Gorbachev, and there was to be a big signing ceremony in Moscow in August of 1991.

Ironically, despite being heralded as Gorbachev's great success in democratizing the Soviet Union, the New Union Treaty was never ratified. Just before the treaty was scheduled to be signed, a coup d'état occurred and Gorbachev was placed under house arrest. Hard liners came to power promising to roll back the reforms enacted by Gorbachev. However, the hard liners soon found that the public was against the coup as protesters turned out demanding that the reforms continue. A tense standoff ensued between protesters in Moscow and the military. Much like the communist governments of Eastern Europe, the military could not be counted upon to crack down on the protesters, and many of the soldiers refused to obey orders requiring them to attack the protesters. In a matter of a few days, the coup failed, and Gorbachev was released from house arrest, but he no longer had authority. The Russian public had supported Boris Yeltsin, who was then President of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. Within a period of months, Gorbachev found himself a president without a state, as the Soviet Union dissolved, and fifteen newly independent states emerged.

Like the transitions in Eastern Europe that had occurred just a couple of years earlier, Russian President Yeltsin embraced Western values and demanded a quick transition to a market economy. While he was quick to accept Western economic institutions, he was less enthusiastic about adopting Western democratic norms. However, it is nevertheless clear that the dissolution of the Soviet Union further proved that Western soft power was at its zenith, while Russian soft power was at a nadir. The Soviet system had collapsed, and the ideology of the Soviet period had been shown to be less attractive than Western ideology. While Russians began to embrace capitalism and Western ideologies, Russian soft power remained very weak. Despite the fact that the roots of Russian soft power were strong, Moscow's

perceived weakness and financial problems could not present an attractive face internationally.

In fact, the early period of Yeltsin's presidency was focused on embracing American soft power and seeking aid from the West. Yeltsin tried to integrate Russia into Western institutions and tried to institute economic reforms to bring Russia more in line with Western ideology. The economic reforms actually led to increased corruption and economic inequality by allowing oligarchs to gain control of former state-owned enterprises (Aslund 2013). This in turn soured the Russian public on Western ideology, and clearly showed that Russia needed to forge its own path to democratization and economic reform.

The 1998 financial crisis was a perfect storm of inefficiency, corruption, and foreign economic difficulties that led the government to default on its domestic debt, put a moratorium on foreign creditors, and devalue the ruble. More importantly than the crisis was the fact that the financial tragedy encouraged Russian policy makers to stop trying to embrace the West and its institutions and instead create a new path forward and develop a new Russian national idea. The problem was that while the financial crisis encouraged Russians to develop a new national idea and identity not based upon those of the West, Russia's weak economy prevented them from being able to export that national idea and identity in the form of soft power.

Further, the financial crisis was seen by many in Washington and Brussels as proof that Russia had lost its "great power" status.[4] Despite the fact that Moscow still maintained a vast nuclear arsenal, policy makers in the West believed that the weak Russian economy and the disarray of Russian institutions meant that Russia would be nothing more than a mid-level regional power. This loss of status in the eyes of Western policy makers was acutely felt by both Russian policy makers and ordinary Russians alike, and began to breed resentment towards the West. Even the Russian policy makers who were the most open to the West and Western reforms believed that while Moscow was not willing or able to challenge the West's actions in Eastern Europe, that they would not tolerate the West's expansion and meddling in the post-Soviet space. Despite a weak economy, the spread of Western influence into the post-Soviet space was something that they could not tolerate.

However, following the financial crisis, Russia's economy began to improve. The Russian economy started to recover as the price of oil increased. When Vladimir Putin took over as president in 2000, he ushered in a new era of economic prosperity as Russia was able to retire its foreign debts and began to increase its financial reserves Furthermore, Russia was able to create the National Priority Projects in 2005, which were designed to increase the national standard of living.

Russia's improved economy meant that it had one of the best economies in the post-Soviet region. Many people from poorer regional states began

immigrating to Russia to better their lives. This new immigration and the booming state of the Russian economy began to increase Russian soft power in the region (Feklyunina 2008; Hill 2006). However, the increase in Russian soft power was only partially due to the economy and energy. Another major factor was Putin's foreign policy reorientation that prioritized relations with the former Soviet states. He focused on building relationships with these countries, and while Russia was the regional hegemon, it did not have the power to force other regional states to comply with its wishes. Instead, Moscow had to build relationships and work to develop regional trust (Slobodchikoff 2013b, 2014; Willerton, Goertz, and Slobodchikoff 2015; Willerton, Slobodchikoff, and Goertz 2012).

The lack of a coercive foreign policy during the early 2000s helped to further aid in the spread of Russia's soft power (Hill 2006). This is not to say that Russia was unwilling to use coercive force to influence foreign policy and domestic policy outcomes, merely that during this period Russia was forced to first build enough trust to achieve its foreign policy goals, and thus used less coercive force. In fact during this period, some scholars heralded the arrival of Russian soft power and the ability of the Russian government to spread that soft power within the post-Soviet region (Hill 2006). Russian soft power was still not strong during this period, but scholars noted that it had increased significantly since its nadir at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The purpose of this chapter is to examine Russian soft power and its presence in the former Soviet states and Eastern Europe. We first examine the roots of Russian soft power, then we examine the positive aspects of Russian soft power, then we turn to the competition over the spread of soft power, and finally we examine Russia's policy towards soft power and its efforts to strengthen its soft power.

## ROOTS OF RUSSIAN SOFT POWER

The question of identity is fundamental to Russian soft power. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia found itself in a unique situation of having to redefine its national identity (Franklin and Widdis 2006; Tolz 1998; Tsygankov 2013; Willerton and McGovern 2010). The communist ideology had created a new cultural identity for Soviet citizens, but had failed, and the new Russian Federation had to create a new national identity.

Since the Soviet identity professed a new type of identity based upon a modern non-religious and post-nationalist ideology, it was only natural that a new result would have to be built on the foundations of previous conceptions of Russian identity. Not only was Moscow seeking a new identity and ideology, Russian society at large was also searching for this new identity.

At first, many Russians embraced Western values and sought to create a European identity. Many Russians travelled to Europe and the United States, and Russians tried to emulate the Western world. This was especially prevalent in consumer goods, as Russians rushed to buy European products that were superior to those made at home. Russians embraced a new consumerism, as they had a much higher level of manufactured goods that they had not previously been able to have in the Soviet Union. However, Russians also embraced Western agricultural products, which were often inferior to Russian produce. This had the effect of decimating domestic agricultural production. Despite embracing Western consumerism and increased travel, a Russian national identity failed to emerge from this encounter. While they embraced Western values, the Russian people did not settle into the European ethos.

Writers and philosophers began discussions of what it means to be Russian, often returning to questions posed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as to whether or not Russians were European or Asian (Becker 1991; Franklin and Widdis 2006). For example, Aleksandr Blok's famous poem on the Scythians challenges traditional conceptions of Russian national identity by claiming that Russians are Scythians, astride between Europe and Asia, protecting Europe from the East (Blok 1969). The importance of Blok's poem lies in the fact that he delineates a Russian identity as neither Eastern nor Western, but rather as a distinct identity forged in battle and protecting Western people from an external threat by suffering defeat yet preventing that threat from moving further west.[5]

Writers like Blok perpetuated the idea of Russian exceptionalism. They believed that the Russian identity truly was unique and unrepeatable and not like any other character in the East or the West. The Russian identity was based on straddling both Asia and Europe and was distinct in that it embraced the suffering that took place because of its geographical vulnerability. This Russian exceptionalism gave birth to the Slavophiles, who emphasized Russia's difference from the West while rejecting the Western path to development. They viewed Western philosophy and development as alien to Russia and Russian culture. In contrast to the Slavophiles, another group of philosophers, the Westernizers believed that Russia was backward technologically, culturally, and philosophically, and should modernize to emulate the West (Berdyaev and Bamford, 1992). In truth, the Westernizer and Slavophile debate had started much earlier with the reforms of Peter the Great in the late seventeenth century. However, the debate really became heated in the nineteenth century, and continues to the present day. In other words, the sense of Russian identity really hinges on whether it is European (Westernizer) or unique and exceptional (Slavophile). In fact, Neumann (1996), argues that while Russia is attracted to a politically, economically, and more socially developed Europe, it also believes in the appeal of playing a European impe-

rial role in Asia, and thus again being at the bridge of both continents. Thus, Neumann (1996) argues that Russia has to separate its own identity from that of Europe and further create an identity based upon Russian exceptionalism.

The Russian identity as viewed by Slavophiles is not only exceptional and bridging different cultures, but also incorporates suffering of the people as part of the national identity. For example, Blok describes the people as suffering tremendously to protect Europe from the attack of the Mongols.

The Russian philosophy of suffering is not unique to Blok but originates in the Russian Orthodox faith which recognized Jesus Christ's agony which absolved the sins of man. Further, the Virgin Mary suffered tremendously in losing her only son so that man's iniquities could be forgiven. The suffering of both Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary make them closer to God and serve as role models for Orthodox Christians. The Russian Orthodox Church therefore teaches that suffering is an important aspect of faith, and that through suffering, true believers will be closer to God and will be rewarded for their suffering in the afterlife (Rancour-Laferriere 2003; Zenkovsky 1963).

Many writers expanded on the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church on the virtues of suffering. For example, Fyodor Dostoevsky not only utilized Russian Orthodox core beliefs in many of his books, but also infused those beliefs with Russian nationalism. He often wrote of a Slavic nationalism that formed the basis of a Russian nationality. Thus many of his characters not only followed Orthodox teachings, but also took on a uniquely Russian and Slavic persona.[6] The drama Dostoevsky[7] presented showed the danger to Russian culture through its encounter with modernity, or the West, as this led to a fundamental disorientation and eventually nihilism. Thus, Dostoevsky is particularly important to the Russian identity because he witnessed the damaging consequences that emerged through the encounter with Western enlightenment thought. Through the writings of Dostoevsky and Nikolay Gogol,[8] a new concept of the Russian Soul was born.[9] The Russian Soul was changed but not lost through the original encounter with modernity, so the contemporary Western intellectual climate is just as potentially damaging to the Russian ethos. To illustrate how deeply this idea is embedded in the Russian ethos, the Soviet Union was officially atheistic but within its ideology it maintained the idea that the Russian people were suffering for all of humanity (Del Noce 2014). Christian suffering is so ingrained on the Russian soul that it was present even during the communist period.

The Russian Soul combines elements of Russian philosophy with religious suffering and nationalism to create the basis of a national identity. Further, the concept of the Russian Soul is one of the roots of Russian soft power. However, while the Russian Soul is an important foundation for Russian soft power, it is not its only basis. Russian soft power builds upon and borrows from the Russian Soul.

The Russian national identity is made up not only of their cultural ethos, but also of their geopolitical heritage. An important factor is Russia's status in the global hierarchy as a great power. The collapse of the Soviet Union dealt a huge blow to the Russian sense of self-respect. Russia believed that even though it was no longer a superpower, it still deserved to be consulted about major policies that affected the world at large. It believed that because of its history and nuclear capabilities, that it maintained its international prestige and deserved the respect that is due to great powers. However, it became increasingly clear that the West did not believe that Russia was a great power following the Cold War, and while it was willing to cooperate with Russia, it was not willing to extend the respect that Russia believed that it was owed. Russia made concessions that were not in its interest with the expectation that the West would give in return and make sacrifices to help it, but the West never reciprocated (Lukin 2008). This was especially evident to the Russians as NATO and the EU expanded into Eastern Europe over Russia's objections (Lukin 2014). Under Yeltsin, Russia had first requested that NATO be disbanded and that a new agreement on cooperation and security in Europe be enacted. The West refused to discuss that possibility and Yeltsin requested that Russia would be allowed to join NATO and cooperate to bring security to Europe. Moscow was again rebuffed, and instead NATO and the EU expanded into Eastern Europe.

As Russia saw the expansion of NATO and the EU into its former satellite states, Russia began to increasingly feel insulted and belittled. Policy makers rediscovered the philosophy of Ivan Ilyin, a Russian monarchist who studied the reasons the Russian Revolution occurred. He believed that the Revolution occurred in large part due to the loss of self-respect among Russians following World War I. Interestingly, he argued that this loss of dignity led to a chasm between the subjects and the state, and that this gulf grew into revolution. Ultimately, Ilyin believed in the necessity of a strong state led by a benevolent monarch who would care for the people of Russia. He maintained that neither democracy nor totalitarianism was right for Russia, but rather that Russia required a strong state with a very powerful leader in order to stave off revolution.

Ilyin's philosophy was quickly adopted by Russian policy makers, especially under Putin, who argued that Western democracy would not work for Moscow because Russia was unique and needed a strong leader to guide its reemergence as a strong state. In fact, Ilyin's philosophical works were widely distributed to Russian regional governors to emphasize that Putin was a strong leader who was reining in the power of the regions and re-creating a strong Russian state (Gardels 2014; Lucas 2014; Stent 2008).

Ilyin's philosophy is important as a counter to Western philosophy because he stresses the strength of the state as being the most important factor of survival and that democracy is problematic as it can weaken the state.

Furthermore, a strong leader must be able to strengthen the state and take care of its citizen's interests. Finally, it is important to note that self-respect is theoretically important because its weakening is linked to a higher likelihood of a revolution. As Moscow's place as a great power fell following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many policy makers pointed to its loss of face and respect, which in turn led to more turmoil in Russia. As the state strengthened during the early 2000s due to rising oil prices and Putin's policies, policy makers began to solidify their understanding of Russian national identity and its place in the international system. Using the concept of national identity as a building block, Russian soft power combines different cultural aspects to fully create an indigenous, home-produced soft power. We now turn to the various cultural aspects that are also included in contemporary Russian soft power.

## RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

Traditionally, linguists have argued that all Slavic languages evolved from a proto-Indo-European language (Jakobson 1955; Kortlandt 1994). They transformed into a proto-Slavic language, and then further changed according to three different geographical groups of Slavic languages. Specifically these groups of Slavic languages are broken up into West Slavic languages,[10] South Slavic languages,[11] and East Slavic languages (T. Slobodchikoff 2008, 2013).[12]

The Russian language itself is a descendent of Old Church Slavonic, which became the liturgical language of the Russian Orthodox Church. As of 2010, the Russian language was spoken by approximately 137.5 million native speakers in Russia, 93.7 million native speakers in the former Soviet Union (FSU), and 12.9 million native speakers in Eastern Europe and the Balkans (Арефьев 2013).[13] The fact that so many people share Russian as their native language across Eastern Europe and the FSU facilitates the spread of Russian soft power. The shared language allows for the dissemination of information through various types of media and social media, allowing the Russian government to spread its soft power.

In the early 1990s, debates within the Russian government raged as to how closely to associate with those native Russian speakers who following the collapse of the Soviet Union found themselves living in newly independent countries (Jackson 2003). Many policy makers wanted to forge closer ties and protect ethnic Russian speaking minorities in countries like the Baltic States. They tried to get many governments, especially in the Baltics, to adopt Russian as a national language or minimally to adopt policies protecting native Russian speakers (Slobodchikoff 2010).

Despite the fact that the policy makers were often unsuccessful at helping to protect ethnic Russian minority linguistic rights, nevertheless native Russian language speakers were spread in large numbers across the FSU and Eastern Europe allowing a receptive audience for the spread of Russian soft power. While we will discuss the Russian government's use of media to spread its soft power later in this chapter, it is important to note that the number of native Russian speakers allows the government to spread its message very easily. We now turn to a discussion of historical nostalgia.

## Historical Nostalgia

While Moscow's communist government collapsed for a myriad of reasons, its breakdown had a profound effect on people living within the Soviet Union. For many individuals with little access to wealth and ties to the government, the social net that they could rely on during Soviet times was no longer available. They had worked all of their lives taking for granted that the guarantees provided by the Soviet government would always be available. However, with the collapse, those guarantees were no longer present. People found their savings depleted through hyperinflation and no longer having guaranteed employment, they were left with no understanding as to how to function within a new society based on capitalist rules. In fact, Russian President Vladimir Putin famously stated:

> Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory. Moreover, the epidemic of disintegration infected Russia itself. Individual savings were depreciated, and old ideals destroyed. Many institutions were disbanded or reformed carelessly. Terrorist intervention and the Khasavyurt capitulation that followed damaged the country's integrity. Oligarchic groups—possessing absolute control over information channels—served exclusively their own corporate interests. Mass poverty began to be seen as the norm. And all this was happening against the backdrop of a dramatic economic downturn, unstable finances, and the paralysis of the social sphere.[14]

The social sphere was one of the most important aspects of life in the former Soviet Union to suffer. Not only was the social safety net gone, but people also had to change their orientation from a communal social structure to a new one which was based upon rewarding individualism. In this respect, the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster for the Russian people.

While the Soviet Union had many problems, nevertheless, many who found it difficult to drastically change their weltanschauung[15] began to feel a certain nostalgia for the Soviet way of life. This was not only true for those

living in the former Soviet Union, but was also true for those who were living in Eastern Europe and the former Warsaw Pact countries. Many of those people enjoyed watching Soviet movies, cartoons, and listening to Soviet and socialist music.

This nostalgia further laid the foundation for Russian soft power to spread not only throughout the former Soviet Union, but also into Eastern Europe. While people would often discuss the problems and difficulties of the Soviet period, over time, people began looking fondly back not to its political aspects, but rather to its culture. However, the longing for old Soviet movies and music was not the only cultural export that helped bolster Russian soft power. We now turn to other cultural exports which help to build Russian soft power.

## Russian Exports of High Culture

The fine arts have always been considered a good way to spread cultural goodwill and soft power. In the United States, efforts had often been made for groups to travel to showcase their talents and spread American soft power as cultural ambassadors. American dance companies were often sponsored by the US Department of State to travel to showcase American culture and values (Croft 2015). This was a relatively inexpensive way of garnering good publicity and spreading soft power.

One of Russia's most famous cultural exports is ballet and other fine arts. Even prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian ballet companies would often go on world tours. They would often travel to the West, where they would be welcomed with great acclaim. Despite deep cuts in the government's cultural budget, the fine arts were able to maintain their standards of excellence. One of the ways in which they were able to survive was by going on these world tours, where Western theaters were willing to pay very high prices so that the Russian ballet companies could come and give performances. For example, the artistic director of the Mariinsky Ballet Company in Saint Petersburg, Valery Gergiev, has been very adept at signing cooperation agreements with Western theaters to come to perform ballets and operas in New York and Washington, DC ("Mariinsky, Met Extend Contract" 2012; Midgette 2010).

Groups like Russia's Mariinsky Ballet Company not only have profited from signing cooperation agreements with Western Theaters but have also helped to spread Russian soft power. People who only know of the reputation of Russian ballet and opera are able to gain exposure to the high quality of Russian dance and opera.

Companies aren't the only groups that have acted as cultural diplomats of Russian culture. Certain individual artists have also gained worldwide notoriety and spread Russian soft power. For example, singers Dmitry Khvorostov-

sky and Anna Netrebko are famous around the world, and they are in high demand by global opera companies.

In addition to fine arts, Russia is internationally known for its literature and classical music. Authors such as Dostoevsky, Pushkin, Tolstoy, and others are often read in translation around the world, while orchestras around the world often play Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Glinka, among other famous Russian composers. In short, Russia's soft power derives its strength from a long history of renowned high culture. Its soft power capabilities are extremely high provided that Russia is able to harness and utilize its cultural manifestations. We now turn to the use of soft power and how governments can spread soft power.

## SPREADING SOFT POWER

One of the difficulties of soft power is harnessing it for use. The US government has often been aware of the strength of soft power, and has worked to develop programs which try to spread American soft power. One of the ways in which the government spreads soft power is through cultural and educational exchanges. For example, the United States grants many student visas for students to study in the United States. In 2001–2013, close to 820,000 international students studied in the United States. In comparison, approximately 283,000 Americans studied abroad (DeSilver 2013). The US government views the international students as important in that they will come and experience American culture, and will then return to their home countries and then spread American soft power.

International student programs are not the only way that the United States spreads its soft power. One of the main ways that the United States spreads soft power is by providing information. During the Cold War, the United States used media programming like Voice of America and other programs that would spread the official US message and hope that it would resonate and, thereby, gain greater influence. This programming was broadcast over short wave radio to avoid government censors. Many people in countries that strictly controlled information would often try to listen to broadcasts from the United States, equating Voice of America with the freedom that many people sought. In fact, the United States' soft power spread so effectively precisely because it stood for freedom and in stark contrast to authoritarian regimes during the Soviet era.

One of the most effective ways to spread soft power for the United States was through movies. Hollywood introduced the concept of the American dream, which is the idea that everyone can be successful in the United States providing that he or she works hard. So the United States is not only the land of the free, but also the land of opportunity. Movies were able to show this

concept in such a way that allowed soft power to spread around the world without the government actively trying to promote the spread of the soft power.

Finally, one of the most effective ways to spread soft power was through consumerism. During the Cold War, products made in the United States were exported throughout Western Europe. With consumer products in the Soviet bloc being of poorer quality than those made in the West, many people in the communist world yearned for Western and US-made goods. Those products also became synonymous with freedom and opportunity, which further spread the United States' soft power.

While soft power can be spread through government initiatives, the most effective method of spreading soft power is through non-government entities such as cultural and consumer organizations exporting information and goods. However, soft power is not only spread through the export of information and goods. In the previous chapter, we discussed some of the ways in which Western philosophy is transformative and has the ability to transform and destroy cultures. A country's ideology and philosophical orientation is extremely vital to spreading soft power. We now turn to examining how Russia spreads its soft power.

## Spreading Russian Soft Power

In the early 2000s, Moscow saw its soft power increase along with its national identity and Russia became one of the most stable countries in the post-Soviet space, and many workers began to immigrate. Russia began a more conciliatory foreign policy towards regional states within the post-Soviet region, and cooperated with the United States on many issues such as counter-terrorism operations and intelligence.

While the early 2000s were marked with more conciliatory foreign policy towards many states within the post-Soviet region, Russia was not able to build trust with all of its regional neighbors. States like Armenia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan developed cooperative relations with Russia, while states like Moldova and Georgia worked to distance themselves (Slobodchikoff 2013b). During this period Russia was trying to develop a new regional identity to cement its place as the regional hegemon by forming new multilateral organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Eurasian Customs Union, and the Common Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).[16] Further, the development of these organizations was a way to try to regain the seat at the table of global leadership that Russia had lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union. It should be noted that during the early 2000s, Moscow was content to be a regional power. It did not try to spread its soft power globally, as it recognized that it did not have the ability to do so.

However, not all of the states within the region were happy with Russian plans for regional order.

Georgia and Moldova opposed the Russian regional order and sought to counter Russian regional hegemonic power. Thus, they began to pursue a more open relationship with the European Union. In turn, the EU was interested in gaining influence in the former Soviet states, and wanted to try and use the European Neighborhood Program (ENP) which gave preferential access to European markets while also creating a new category of states (Barbé and Johansson-Nogués 2008; Gänzle 2009; Lavenex 2008). These states would be able to cooperate with the EU, but would be unlikely to become EU member-states (Smith 2005). The idea of the ENP was to continue with the spread and diffusion of European norms while limiting the promises of membership to the EU (Schimmelfennig and Scholtz 2008; Smith 2005).

Initially the EU assumed that its norm diffusion would affect Russia and create a strong democratic Russia in addition to spreading democracy and human rights to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (FSU). However, it soon became clear that Russia was not transitioning as quickly to democracy as the states in Eastern Europe, and the EU believed that it had to continue to try to diffuse its norms in the post-Soviet space (Averre 2009; Haukkala 2009).

On November 21, 2004, Ukraine held a presidential election between Viktor Yushchenko, who favored closer ties with Western Europe, and Viktor Yanukovych, who favored closer ties with Russia. Ukraine was at a crossroads, and was on the verge of deciding its future allegiance. The runoff election was marred by fraud, and many domestic and foreign election monitors reported that the election had been rigged by the Ukrainian authorities in favor of Yanukovych. These election monitors reported that there was massive corruption, voter intimidation, and electoral fraud (Lane 2008; Pifer 2007). Further, there was widespread public perception of electoral fraud, and the public began to demand change.

In Kiev, thousands of protesters began turning out demanding that the official election results be overturned. Between November 2004 and January 2005, Kiev's Independence Square was constantly full of protesters demanding that their votes be truly counted. Further, through the use of social media, protests spread to other parts of Ukraine (Goldstein 2007).

The protesters succeeded in getting the Ukrainian Supreme Court to rule the results of the election invalid and to declare that a new election would take place. Close international scrutiny followed the new election, and after the ballots were counted, Yushchenko was declared the victor with 52 percent of the vote to Yanukovych's 44 percent. Yushchenko renewed his resolve to move Ukraine more into the orbit of the European Union (EU) and away from under Russian influence.

The protests and eventual triumph of Yushchenko became known as the Ukrainian Orange Revolution which was heralded by many in Europe and the United States as evidence that Western ideas and ideals were spreading eastward. Democratization was finally taking hold, and the West could further spread liberal democracy and its institutions into the post-Soviet space (McFaul 2007; Wilson 2006). Further, many in the West viewed the Orange Revolution as evidence of the effectiveness of NGOs and the Western efforts to build up Ukrainian civil society to bring about democratic change (Wilson 2006).

However, the EU also found itself in a trap which was similar to its approach to force its own hand in having to proffer membership to Eastern European states following their acceptance of the EU *acquis communitaire* (Schimmelfennig 2001); the EU found itself in a similar trap with Ukraine (Wolczuk 2005). The United States and the EU had worked to achieve change in Ukraine, but now that Kiev had declared its intent to turn away from Russia and join the EU, the EU would risk destabilizing the new Yushchenko government, which in turn would negate the gains achieved in the Orange Revolution.

The EU instead chose to increase its relations with Ukraine through the European Neighborhood Program (ENP) which could further institutionalize democratic reforms and ideals in Ukraine (Kubicek 2007). Further, the EU could then ensure that Russia would no longer possess as much influence over Ukraine as it had prior to the Orange Revolution.

The EU believed that helping the FSU achieve democracy would ensure a more stable Europe, and it believed that it could achieve such change through the ENP. For example, the EU believed very strongly that it could help to ensure that the Orange Revolution in Ukraine could be successful and limit Russian interference within Ukraine's domestic politics (Kubicek 2007). While both Ukraine and Moldova initially felt slighted that they were targeted for the ENP instead of being offered conditional membership to the EU, they believed that an association agreement through the ENP was a step in the direction of eventual membership in the EU (Averre 2009; Smith 2005).

The Orange Revolution took Russia by surprise (Saari 2014).[17] Russia had developed a relationship with Ukraine that while Kiev did not necessarily fully trust Russia, nevertheless, it was reliant upon Moscow for natural resources (Balmaceda 1998; Feklyunina 2012; Goldman 2010; Mroz and Pavliuk 1996). Russia had been working towards economic integration with Ukraine and had provided special pricing for natural gas in exchange for continued influence. Yet, despite the fact that it was in Ukraine's economic interest to maintain good relations with Russia, the Orange Revolution proved that Ukraine was striving to distance itself from Russian influence and move toward the West and potential EU membership.

Russia understood the results of the Orange Revolution as being evidence of the power of ideas (Popescu 2006). The European Union had long prided itself on being an ideational power capable of fundamentally changing the behavior and domestic institutions of the state (Manners 2006; Noutcheva 2007; Slobodchikoff 2010; Tocci and Hamilton 2008), and Russia believed that the Orange Revolution showed that the EU was now trying to vie for influence in the former Soviet states, an area that Russia had traditionally viewed as being within its own sphere of influence.

Russia believed that if it was going to maintain its regional influence, it needed to compete with the European Union in its power of ideas. It realized that it needed to develop its own powerful ideas that would be able to successfully counter those offered by the EU. In short, it needed to bolster its soft power and then utilize it to maintain and even gain influence against the EU. However, more fundamentally Russia also understood that it could not directly counter the ideas of the West. The Russian national identity was a powerful symbol domestically, but was not powerful outside of Russia. Therefore, it had to develop a new strategy to counter Western influence. Russia had to turn to a negative campaign against Western values while it did not need to provide an alternative value system. All Russia had to do was to try to discredit and raise questions about Western values, and they could be successful in slowing the spread of Western soft power. This made its task easier as Moscow did not need to provide an alternative, but sought to show the hypocrisy or moral incongruity in the Western proposals.

However, before they could successfully discredit Western values, they had to target the damage caused by Western values present in the post-Soviet space. They believed that despite the fact that the EU and NATO were looking to spread into Eastern Europe and the Baltics, that neither NATO nor the EU member states would risk direct war with Russia. Thus, they cultivated frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia and Transnistria in Moldova. Russia recognized that according to ascension rules for both organizations, territorial conflicts and simmering civil war would prevent those states from becoming members. Both the EU and NATO tried to maintain close ties with the elites of those states with frozen conflicts, often by stating that eventually those states might be able to gain membership.

In the case of Georgia, it was led to believe that it could eventually join the EU and NATO, and strongly believed that this would be a good way to counter Russia's regional hegemonic power. However, in 2008, Georgia attacked the breakaway republic of South Ossetia, which ignited a small war between Russia and Georgia. Russia invaded Georgian territory and defeated the Georgian army.

The 2008 Georgian War was the last bit of evidence to show a break between Russia and the West. Russia was willing to prevent Western influence from expanding into the former Soviet states by using force if neces-

sary. Further, Russian actions showed that they believed that the world system was no longer unipolar, but rather was starting to become more multipolar, and in turn led Russian policy makers to see Russia as a post-Western power (Tsygankov 2009). In other words, Russia believed that the time of US hegemony was quickly coming to an end, and that it could provide an alternative regional order than that provided by the West.

It is important to note that after the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, Russian soft power evolved differently from traditional soft power proposed by Nye in that it really lacks a specific ideology. Instead, Russian soft power focuses on being a counter ideology, specifically setting itself up as being a power that is counter to that of the West (Simons 2014). It views the expansion of Western power as a threat, and views its soft power as being a vital element of countering that threat.

While Russian hard power was on display in the Georgian War, Russian soft power was extremely important in increasing Russia's power in the region. For example, Russian soft power was largely responsible for rolling back many of the gains of the color revolutions in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan (Tsygankov 2011). While many in the West had looked upon the color revolutions as a stark democratic transition in both Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, corruption and many other problems hampered the new governments that had been established, and soon elites again turned toward accepting Russian influence in the region.

It is important to note that Russian soft power, and specifically the use of Russian soft power by the government was not only used as a tool to expand Russian influence. While some scholars argue that Russian soft power is merely a means of creating a new Russian empire (Bugajski 2008; Suny 2010), it was really not a tool to try to re-create a new Russian empire. In fact, the most important use of Russian soft power was mainly to try to create regional stability and to keep outside influence from entering into the post-Soviet space (Slobodchikoff 2013a; Tsygankov 2006). That is not to say that Russia was not looking to increase its influence, merely that was not its overarching goal. However, as both the EU and NATO expanded and Russia grew even more powerful, Russia began to formulate its soft power to move beyond the regional level to try to spread its version of soft power globally (Dolinskiy 2013; Haukkala 2008, 2009; Popescu and Wilson 2009). Specifically, it looked to counter Western values and ideology on a global scale. We now turn to examining how the Russian government has tried to spread its soft power globally.

## GLOBAL SPREAD OF RUSSIAN SOFT POWER

Russia realized that it could not directly challenge the power of the United States and the West. It was a resurgent regional power, but certainly did not possess enough power to directly contest Washington. One of the best ways to oppose the United States was to indirectly do so, by disputing some normative aspects of Western ideology. For example, Russia developed a new form of democracy that it refers to as "Sovereign Democracy," which provides a direct contrast to the norm of liberal democracy that is spread by the West (Kokoshin 2006; Krastev 2006; Lipman 2006; Makarychev 2008; Okara 2007; Petrov 2005). By using such normative forms of challenging Western norms, Russia worked with China to balance Western soft power in Eastern Europe (Ferguson 2012).

Russian leaders wanted to create the governmental structures that would allow it to present its message to foreign audiences and expand its soft power. Several initiatives emerged in the past decade and they have given Moscow the ability to communicate globally. One institutional effort to defend Russia's image in the West was the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation that was opened in Moscow in 2007 and has since expanded to Paris and New York (Saari 2014; Simons 2015). This enterprise defends the Russian democratic ethos and highlights the instances when the West violates democratic principles or human rights (Saari 2014). The government has also hired American public relations companies to allow it to better communicate Russian ideas to Western audiences (Saari 2014). The Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Foundation emerged in 2010 and it works to defend Russian governmental institutions and cultural values and it works to coordinate other NGOs operating internationally (Saari 2014; Simons 2015). The Russian Council on International Affairs also opened in 2010 and it is focused on spreading public diplomacy to the West. An initial appraisal suggests that Russian public diplomacy is not credible because it presents an image that is too positive so that it appears more like propaganda rather than a realistic policy defense (Avgerinos 2009). However, public relations institutions learn over time and are likely to find the political and cultural elements that resonate with Westerners and more effectively present them in the future. Moscow has developed the institutional framework to have a public diplomacy that can consistently reach foreigners and thereby has the capacity to expand Russian soft power.

Russia realized that its soft power was not as strong as that of the United States and Europe, and recognized that it would have to seriously invest in its soft power to try to counter the Western competition. One of the ways that it tried to expand its soft power was to create new study abroad programs for students to study in Russia. The idea is similar to student programs in the United States, where students would come to experience life and culture in

Russia and then bring Moscow's soft power back to their home countries (Dolgov 2015; Лебедева and Фор 2009).

Russia began to provide more foreign aid, especially in the form of disaster relief. For example, in 2014, Russia was one of the first countries to send in aid to Serbia following severe flooding that left many people homeless and many lives in peril (Robinson 2014). This type of foreign aid is extremely important in spreading good will and thus spreading Russia's soft power.

The previous examples of spreading soft power are positive examples in that they spread Russian ideas, but do not try directly to compete and destroy other values and ideology. Instead, it tries to build good will and positive feelings toward Russia. Foreign aid or accepting foreign students does not demand that students abandon their own culture and values. Good will is thus achieved through the positive transfer of soft power. However, the competitive nature of Russian soft power with the West also created negative types of soft power by trying to change individual cultures and values of other states. Again the West was much more advanced in changing values and ideals than Russia, so Russia had to find ways to attack and denigrate Western values and ideology.

One area in which Russia felt it was extremely deficient in soft power compared to the West was its ability to spread information. Russia believed that the West was able to disseminate information quickly and throughout the world easily, often spreading information that was not favorable to Russia (Chernenko 2012; Kosachev 2012). Russia knew that it had to find an avenue to disseminate information. In that regard, Russia began to focus on social media, as that is a quick way to spread information. It could challenge traditional Western accounts of events in comments sections of Western media and also begin to cast Western values as an attack on traditional values. Russia began to cast the spread of Western values as a direct attack on Russia's and Eastern Europe's traditional values such as arguing that the acceptance of homosexuality and more liberal social norms were eroding and destroying the way of life of those in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Another tactic to spread Russian soft power was to create new virtual spaces of a Russian world on the internet (Gorham 2011). Specifically, the Russian government created a virtual environment called Fond Russkii Mir (Russian World Foundation). The Russian World Foundation was a specific initiative established by Russian president Vladimir Putin to both promote the Russian language, while also cooperating with the Russian Orthodox Church in promoting Russian and Eastern values. The idea was not only to reach Russian diasporas around the world, but also to promote an ideological conceptualization of Russian culture and soft power around the world. In other words, the Russian World Foundation would help spread Russian soft power. Further, the Russia World Foundation would stress the comparison of Western and Eastern values and show that Russia was the protector of tradi-

tional culture and values against Western aggression through social liberal values and ideology.

However, the problem with both social media and the Russian World Foundation concept is that people must go to these locations for it to be effective. In other words, most of the people who seek these services and methods of spreading Russian soft power are those who are not Moscow's target audience as they are already consumers of Russian soft power. Generally, they already speak Russian and are sympathetic to Russian values and ideology. It is not difficult to preach to the converted. Yet Russia needed to find a way to sow the seeds of doubt about the moral justness of Western values and ideology if it was to be successful in spreading its soft power.

The Russian government realized how important media outlets were in spreading soft power and delivering messages. They saw that companies like CNN and other news outlets were very effective in broadcasting Western messages and spreading soft power. Therefore they developed a plan to invest in media programs that would help to spread the Kremlin's message. Specifically, they said that they wanted to develop media that would present news in such a way as not being totally biased toward the Western point of view.

One of the media outlets that the Russian government developed was the Voice of Russia. It was the Russian government's international radio broadcasting service. It was broadcast in over thirty-eight different languages. In 2013, Vladimir Putin decreed that the Voice of Russia was to be merged with the Sputnik News Agency, and would further be incorporated with RIA Novosty (the main Russian news service) into a new news organization called *Rossiya Segodnya* (Russia Today).[18] Russia Today's main aim was to provide information on Russian policy and life and society for international audiences ("Putin Orders Overhaul of Top State News Agency" 2013).

Another of the media outlets that the Russian government established was RT which was developed as a satellite news channel like CNN. It presents 24-hour coverage of news programs, analysis, documentaries, and debates. Many in the West have argued that RT is very biased toward the official Russian government point of view, while RT has argued that it is providing other views besides those of the standard Western media. One of the ways in which RT presents the news is to try to point out hypocrisy in Western values and the way in which Western mass media present the news. For example, commentators will often try to deflect criticisms against Russia by using examples from the West.

One of the most effective ways to deflect Western criticism of Russia is a method termed "whataboutism." Whataboutism was a term that was coined during the Soviet period to describe Soviet comments in pointing out hypocrisy in Western values and actions (Gessen 2014; Headley 2015; Maliukevičius 2015). For example, whenever the West would criticize the

Soviet Union over issues such as human rights, the Soviets would respond with a statement that questioned racial relations in the United States. The comment would never directly address the legitimacy of the criticism, merely deflect the criticism by pointing out the hypocrisy of the criticism in the first place. The Russian government expanded the Soviet technique and began to expand its usage in media programs on RT and other Russian media sources. For example, when the West criticized Russia for its invasion and subsequent referendum in Crimea, Russia immediately pointed to the West's actions in Kosovo and pointed out the hypocrisy of the West's criticism. It is important to note, however, that such a response does not justify or seek to defend Russia's actions, it merely deflects the argument by stating that those leveling the criticism are no better and do not possess the moral authority with which to criticize (Headley 2015). This is a much easier argument to make than a moral justification, and seeds enough doubt in the moral justification of the West to stop the spread of Western soft power.

One of the most noted examples of "Whataboutism" involved Edward Snowden, a US government contractor who worked for the National Security Agency. Snowden became very upset with secret government surveillance programs designed to protect the United States from terrorism. He believed that the data gathering techniques were unconstitutional and violated citizens' rights to privacy. Snowden leaked information about these surveillance programs to the media, and incurred the ire of the United States. In 2013, Snowden left the United States and sought asylum overseas. He tried to flee to Ecuador but the United States cancelled his passport while in route during a layover in the Moscow airport and, as a result, Russia granted him temporary asylum. While the West has accused Moscow of violating international due process, Moscow has used the publicity of Snowden to show that the West is hypocritical as its policies do not match its rhetoric when it comes to protecting individual liberty and freedom. Again, Moscow is able to use the United States' own moral shortcomings as a message that works to stop the spread of Western soft power.

The Russian government's efforts to increase spending on the media as a way of spreading its message globally is an extremely important part of the Russian soft power strategy. However, it should be noted that the budget for these media outlets are still much less than Western media outlets, so it remains to be seen how effective this strategy will be to spread Russian soft power.

However, Russia has not only tried to spread its own message through media outlets, but it has also tried to discredit Western soft power and more specifically the message being presented by Western media outlets. In late 2014 and early 2015, news surfaced that the Russians had employed internet trolls to discredit Western media messages and to try to provide Russian perspectives on certain issues (Bertrand 2015; Gregory 2014; "Putin's 'Troll

Army': Bloggers Forced to 'Flood Websites with Pro-Russian Propaganda'" 2015). The job of these bloggers was basically to provide a positive view of Russian foreign policy and to discredit Western policy. They used social media as well as the comment section of many different internet news sites. They were so successful that many internet newspapers such as *The Moscow Times* stopped allowing comments from individual people, as there were just so many different comments that were pointedly anti-Western and pro-Russian.

The new Russian media strategy to help spread Russia's soft power has been effective in many ways. It has certainly gotten the message to many and presented Russian arguments against Western hegemonic actions. In fact, many critics point to Russia's increased active efforts to spread Russian soft power as being nothing more than propaganda. However, the efforts have been effective enough that the US House of Representatives has even conducted hearings into the danger to national security that this new form of Russian propaganda poses (Royce 2015). The House Committee on Foreign Affairs argued that Russian state marketing was really dangerous to the national security of the United States, and that the United States needed to directly confront Russian propaganda in such a way as to effectively counter and remove the threat.

Despite the gains in the strength of Russian soft power, Russia is still not fully trusted within the post-Soviet space. Many of Russia's past imperial actions during the Soviet era are remembered by the former Soviet republics. Elites in states like Moldova are very wary of trusting Russia due to past behavior. Yet the Moldovan people have been increasingly more in favor of pursuing good relations with Russia and spurning the EU (Higgins 2015; "Poll: Moldovans Prefer Customs Union to EU" 2012). This is evidence of not only the effectiveness of Russian soft power, but also of a growing rift between political elites who are extremely wary of Russia and its intentions and more common people.

Russia's actions in Ukraine in 2014 and 2015 caused more hesitation and mistrust of Russia in the region. In fact, Russia's continued use of hard power is really hampering its soft power in not only the region, but also globally. Joseph Nye defines smart power as the combination of hard and soft power that can be used by a state to increase its influence (Nye 2009a, 2009b). However, it is important to note that both hard and soft power must be used effectively to create smart power. By utilizing hard power in Ukraine through cutting off gas and encouraging the separatists in Eastern Ukraine, it becomes much harder for Russia's soft power to become stronger and spread further globally.

Ultimately, Russia realizes that it is almost impossible to directly counter Western soft power. Eastern Europeans remember life as Soviet states as well as events like Prague Spring. While Russia is not the Soviet Union,

there is still a deep mistrust of Russian intentions toward Eastern Europe. The crisis in Ukraine has only exacerbated that mistrust. Russian efforts at spreading positive soft power through disaster relief and aid can be somewhat successful in states like Serbia, yet can't be expected to be effective in states like Poland. While Russia believes that it is protecting traditional values by opposing the West, it is no less imperialistic in its soft power aims than the West. It also wants to regain its influence in Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet region. Russia recognizes that it is no longer the Soviet Union and does not want to re-create the Soviet Union, but Russia also believes that its values and identity are superior to those of other states, and wants to see the triumph of Russian traditional values over those of the West. Russian soft power as an opposing force to the spread of Western soft power is still in its infancy, yet is growing in power. It is trying to defeat a more powerful foe in much the same way as guerilla insurrections target stronger forces. It attacks its opponent at weak points, but doesn't stay exposed. Instead, Russian soft power focuses on pointing out hypocrisy of Western values and trying to cast doubt on the belief that Western values will inevitably triumph. The irony of the situation is that Eastern Europe is again in the crosshairs of this soft power competition. Neither Russia nor the West is concerned with traditional Eastern European values and traditions, and inevitably those values will be destroyed by the ideological imperial struggle between the two opposing powers.

## NOTES

1. Lavrov 2015.
2. Chernenko 2012.
3. The republics of Georgia, Moldavia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Armenia refused to be a party to the New Union Treaty. The nine republics that were a party to the treaty were: Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan.
4. For an in-depth discussion of the term "great power" and Russia's view of great power status, see Samokhvalov, 2017.
5. In this case, Blok is referring to the Mongol threat. The Mongols invaded Kievan Rus in the thirteenth century, and is credited with destroying Kievan Rus.
6. For examples of such characters, see Dostoyevsky 2014.
7. *The Brothers Karamotsov*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Notes from the Underground*.
8. Especially in Gogol's *Dead Souls* (Gogol 1996).
9. For more information on the Russian Soul see Boym 1995; Williams 1970.
10. Examples include Polish, Czech, and Slovak.
11. Examples include Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian, and Slovenian.
12. Examples include Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorusian.
13. These statistics are for people who consider the Russian language to be their native language.
14. From the Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, April 25, 2005.
15. Literally meaning world view, this is a term that is fundamental to German philosophy. It means how a person views the world in terms of theoretical and philosophical orientation.

16. For a more complete list of multilateral organizations in the post-Soviet space, see Slobodchikoff 2014.

17. When Putin watched the Orange Revolution he is said to have stated, "They [the U.S.] lied to me [Putin was talking about the US]. . . . I'll never trust them again." The revolution's timing was curious for the United States which traded Russian cooperation in the war on terror for Ukraine, which lacked any strategic thinking and weakened the US global position.

18. This is not to be confused with the former television news channel "Russia Today," which became known as RT.

## *Chapter Four*

# Poland

> "I beg you to persist in resisting any government initiative that would corrupt the moral foundations of civilization. More and more attempts by the EU will be made to impose their social-revolutionary agendas on member states. . . . the EU will attempt to impose their new laws that violate the conscience, the memory, and the identity of the people. They will seek to do it through your national government, which came into being only twenty-five years ago, through the outpouring of phenomenal sacrifice and blood. You must be prepared to stand up and fight again and again and again, because the revolution will keep trying to introduce corrupt laws until the resisters lose heart, grow tired, and decline in number."
> —O'Brien and Krajina 2014, page 175

In a moving essay on the cultural changes that divide Western from Central Europe, Milan Kundera (1984) laments the loss Central and Eastern European cultures experienced through Soviet occupation and communist control and wonders how the West failed to name, or even notice, this oppression. Paris, Frankfurt, London, and New York underwent profound cultural changes during the Cold War as the dominant Enlightenment thought was replaced with postmodern ideas and the sexual revolution changed conventional morality. The states behind the Iron Curtain were partially insulated from these movements as they were struggling to preserve their national heritage and identity when Moscow was ruled by communists who brought forth an oppressive revolution that sought to transform and restructure Eastern European societies. Ironically, Kundera shows that it was the subjugated Easterners who were able to preserve their traditional culture and identity while the Western ethos grew more culturally distant. This detachment allowed Paris, London, and Washington to ignore the struggles imposed on Eastern Europe through communist occupation and control.

When the Berlin Wall came down and Eastern European states transitioned away from communism, they immediately turned to the West to provide cultural and intellectual support as well as military protection against future Russian threats. The transition Kundera observed was surprising as the Poles found that Europe had evolved and adopted a materialist ethos and it was now guided by a secular ideology that wished to remove Christianity from modern life. Western Europe adopted many elements that were present in the communist ideology, namely its materialism and secularism, and these ideas would now reach Poland through Western culture. The Eastern Europeans were confronted with a materialistic, hedonistic realm that could not help them generate the cultural renewal they sought. Western Europe considered the newly liberated countries as valuable geo-strategic territory where it could make long-term alliances by helping governments to transform into stable, consolidated democracies. It would also offer foreign aid and expert guidance to help Eastern European states integrate into Western markets and to assist the new free enterprise system. Seeking to distance themselves from the Soviet past, Eastern Europe increasingly turned to Western Europe and the United States to provide for its security and ensure that Moscow could not become a future threat. In return for providing for Eastern Europe's security, Western Europe viewed it as necessary that Eastern Europe adopt its cultural ethos and norms. The West could expand its political, economic, security, and intellectual domination and move into Eastern Europe through culture hegemony rather than military force. Eastern Europe was forced to adopt these norms, albeit at a high cost: it would give up its cultural uniqueness and indigenousness. The new influences presented themselves as liberation and, thereby, could gain acceptance and popular consent which were denied when Moscow was making similar attempts.

Western Europe had undergone a change following World War II: it adopted a materialist ethos, rejected religion and endorsed philosophical relativism, and gradually transformed into a secular, post-Christian civilization. During the Cold War, Poland was fighting to maintain its Western-Catholic culture in the face of an occupying oppressive communist system that generated countless suffering and attacks on its traditional culture and religion. The Russians, in fact, killed many intellectuals and imprisoned cultural leaders, including Stefan Cardinal Wyszíński, but throughout this struggle Poland managed to retain its spirituality and cultural ethos. The Russians were always perceived as foreign oppressors, and thus it was believed that once the Russians were defeated, Poland could again follow its culture without foreign interference. Warsaw longed to rejoin the West, believing that it would find itself in a cultural fraternity and union with its Western European neighbors.

While today Eastern Europe is no longer under Soviet domination, this does not mean that local traditions and customs are not targeted and actively

destroyed by outsiders who wish to impose a new hegemonic culture. In particular, Polish culture is under siege from its exposure to Western European and American values that aim to transform *Polska* into another post-Christian nation so that it would be no different from the major EU states. The danger to Poland is that the domination it experiences today presents itself as liberation and is thereby more powerful and insidious. The West does not use guns or occupation to force compliance, but seduces civilizations through popular culture, consumerism, and radical individualism and, when successful, these societies are assimilated and integrated into the vast globalized secular ethos. For example, the European Union developed the Copenhagen Criteria that all future members would need to adopt if they wanted to become members. These criteria led to the transformational power of Europe and ensuring that other states would adopt and internalize the cultural and philosophical norms of Western Europe. While this benefitted Western Europe in creating like-minded trading partners, it had a devastating impact on traditional cultures that were distinct from that of Western Europe. Thus, small civilizations, such as Poland, lose their uniqueness and become philosophically indistinguishable from post-traditional, economically dominated Western states. If Kundera's observation that the West did not recognize the vulnerability Eastern European nations suffered under Soviet oppression is correct, it is unlikely that the West will comprehend the danger it poses to Poland and its neighbors today.

Poland has a strong Catholic identity and can trace its origin to the baptism of King Mieszko I in 966 which places its cultural development within Christendom. Its people remember the suffering brought on by communism and the daily oppression experienced through Russian domination. While the Catholic Church was silenced and controlled in other states, it remained free in Poland and the cardinal primate rather than the actual communist officials was seen by Poles as the legitimate political leader. The Poles remember their national story and are proud of their history and intellectual greatness. The cultural ethos is European but is unique and distinct from every other on the continent. Today, Poland is confronted by globalization forces originating in Western culture that seek to destroy and integrate all nations into their secular world. Some Poles have come to understand that freedom cannot be separated from cultural preservation and are seeking to protect their traditions and way-of-life, but the majority does not recognize the dangers their country faces. It has become a battleground between the globalizing secular forces and the indigenous Catholic culture and Poland cannot simultaneously satisfy both schools. As such, it is an important front in the cultural conflict that has shifted to small states as their civilizations are targeted by a global elite that seeks to integrate them into the globalized-secular world.

## WESTERN SOFT POWER

Poland has been consistently attracted to Western Europe and the United States in the post-Cold War era, but the soft power generated by the West has evolved and changed over time. Immediately following the 1989 events, the West sought to influence Eastern Europe by promoting democracy, capitalism, and collective security. There was a symbiotic relationship as Poland sought to deepen its liberal institutions and the West sought to expand its influence. As time passed, the West emphasized a secular, post-Christian ethos and sought to introduce this into Eastern Europe. Soft power in this period targeted the presence of religion in society and worked toward imposing the French and German secular model throughout the EU. Using EU institutions and benefits, France and Germany were able to push other states to adopt specific philosophical and secular beliefs in return for the benefits of membership and security. While this pressure has manifested itself in multiple ways in Warsaw, this chapter will focus on two elements that are destructive to Poland's national and Catholic identity: (i) the EU imposition of immigrants that mandates the formation of separate religious and cultural communities; (ii) the Western pressure to adopt the gender ideology that originates in English and American empiricist thought. If these ideas are accepted, Polish society will change and ultimately become closer to that of the secular, post-national states of Western Europe.[1]

Western soft power has been most successful by spreading democracy through Eastern Europe and worked to consolidate governmental institutions so that they could survive political transitions. Poland has a very stable democratic government with low corruption and, in many ways, this was assisted by Washington and Brussels who provided aid and sent experts to strengthen liberal institutions. This support was also directed at transforming the domestic economy from a communist to a capitalist system and, although this created winners and losers within Poland, it was successful as well. Western soft power was effective as it helped transform Warsaw into a democratic and capitalist state, but the desired economic and security gains sought through NATO and EU membership would be less successful.

During the Cold War, Poland's citizens desired membership in both the European Union and NATO. The EU would allow Poland to economically benefit by gaining access to Western European markets, and NATO would provide necessary security against a resurgent Russia. While the United States believed that Russia was vanquished, Poland believed that it was only a matter of time before Russia would again challenge Poland's security. Western soft power was effective during the Cold War and the years following 1989 as Poland desired acceptance and assented to the requirements for membership imposed by the EU and NATO. As a matter of fact, Warsaw was so entranced with the West that it strongly pursued integration more

rapidly than Washington, Paris, and Berlin desired and was willing to make any social, political, or economic change demanded by Western powers. Michael Mandelbaum has frequently stated that "Poland is the most pro-American country in the world—including the United States."[2] Western soft power was so dominant that there was not a state more willing to prove its loyalty to Washington and the EU than Poland.

Did Poland capture the desired benefits from its membership in the EU and NATO? Poland did experience some economic growth which can be attributed to the expanded market opportunities in the EU, but Germany benefited more from Warsaw's entry into the common market, as it got access to cheaper labor from Poland while gaining access to Poland's market for its high-priced goods. Also, the new economic reality has increased the poverty in the Polish countryside and increased agglomeration so that the geographic areas that benefit from the EU are spatially concentrated in the major cities. Poland's economic progress is linked to its subservient role within Europe as multinational firms relocate production facilities into its borders to take advantage of educated workers who earn less than their European counterparts. Since Poland's national commercial "successes" were built on Poland's workers accepting lower salaries, this had made it difficult for workers to support families and, as a result, Poland has not been able to close the wage gap. Thus, EU membership has not delivered the promised growth that would be strong enough to help workers and families.

While initially Poland felt secure by joining NATO, it quickly became clear that NATO overextended its commitments by expanding too quickly. It was easy to provide security commitments to Eastern European states while Russia was weak; however, a resurgent Russia has cast doubt upon NATO's ability to protect its member states, making Poland's NATO membership less beneficial to Warsaw as the security institution has weakened and is less likely to provide help against Russian aggression than at any time since its emergence.[3] The problem is that NATO appeared strong when it was not challenged and it is easy to promise fidelity and support in the event of an invasion when such an outcome is unlikely. Given that Article V of the NATO Treaty ensures that an attack on a member state is considered an attack on all member states, thus ensuring a NATO military response, it had been safe to assume that no state would directly threaten a NATO member state. However, Moscow has crafted a method to support Russian citizens without violating the rubrics that would allow Article V to be invoked. This new method has the additional advantage for Russia of directly weakening NATO's support for its member states in Eastern Europe. Secondly, NATO countries have democratic institutions so leaders wishing to maintain popular support will not have the public backing to honor their pledge. Although Poland made great sacrifices to gain EU and NATO membership, with each

passing year these institutions appear less robust and thus less likely to offer assistance should Poland need it.

Recently, Western soft power has sought to bring about social transformations into Eastern European states that would directly impose a multicultural, post-national character on Poland. If Warsaw were to open its borders to Middle Eastern and African settlers, it would soon be no different from Paris or Munich. Eastern Europe's cultural distinction would be lost and it would be fully integrated into the West. While racism is intrinsically evil and should never be tolerated, nevertheless, there is a loss when a nation gives up its ethnic identity. After the Holocaust, Europeans have been incapable of valuing their distinct national ethnicities and the steps taken in the West that brought forth a new post-national society are now being brought to Poland. Following the end of colonialization, the United Kingdom and France worked to allow many immigrants of foreign colonies to assimilate into their cultures. They insisted on such norms being a part of the European Union. The problem with such an influx of immigrants was that it created a cultural clash between the traditional cultures of the European states and those of the immigrants. The governments in power worked to create a post-cultural identity in Western Europe. They sought to better integrate these cultures. However, this created resentment in both the traditional and immigrant cultures, leading to clashes. The mandatory opening of borders to immigrants allowed for the rapid decay of traditional culture in Poland, ensuring that Poland resembles more the post-national society that Western Europe has been quick to mandate, but not so effective in implementing within their own borders.

In addition, the new soft power imposed by Western Europe pushes sexual norms that violate Christian morality and pressures Eastern European states to choose between their religious faith and the secular West. The gender ideology is being introduced and Warsaw will be forced to choose between the majority Catholic faith which the West considers bigoted and antiquated, or the secular ideology that seeks to re-define interpersonal relationships and impose a new, sexual-focused understanding of the human person. In this latest phase, Poland will lose no matter which path it chooses. It will either be seen as illegitimate and culturally backwards or it will betray the cultural ethos that has existed since the earliest days of its history. Western soft power seeks to universalize a value system based on moral relativism that originated in British and American empiricism and uses a distinct philosophic anthropology system and metaphysics than historical Polish thought. The Poles must suffer Western rejection or adopt norms that will fundamentally change their way of life.

## PRE-WORLD WAR II THROUGH THE COLD WAR

Poland was reborn as a state following World War I and reintegrated into the West where it sought alliances that would provide protection against its more powerful neighbors. Warsaw pursued French defense as Paris had offered similar promises in the past, but never actually expended much effort in protecting its allies once they suffered attack. Although Poland defeated the Russians in the 1920s, by the next decade Warsaw would not be strong enough to face either Russia or Germany on its own. In the 1930s, Poland signed a peace treaty with the Soviet Union which was followed by a separate agreement with Germany. Once the latter treaty was signed, Stalin believed he was betrayed, which led to a massive ethnic cleansing campaign against Poles living in Soviet lands between 1934 to 1939. This operation was so brutal it became "the largest peacetime ethnic shooting campaign in history" (Snyder 2015, page 57). In fact, the Soviet intelligence service, NKVD, "had shot twice as many Poles on its own territory while preparing for war in those years than the *Einsatzgruppen* shot when German forces actually invaded Poland in 1939" (Snyder 2015, page 118). In August 1939, Hitler and Stalin signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact to divide Poland and Warsaw was thus attacked on two fronts in September. World War II started with Poland under full military occupation where it was divided along the front agreed upon by the Nazis and Soviets.

Poland suffered bitterly during the war as Hitler sought to starve the entire population and to have Germans resettle the land that would eventually extend into modern Ukraine. The Nazis outlawed all cultural elements so that they could be destroyed and immediately arrested university professors and other intellectuals and sent them to camps. The Germans systematically annihilated the Polish civilization as they enslaved the population and closed educational facilities. The Russians were equally brutal and caused permanent damage to Polish cultural life as they imprisoned 20,000 military officers, the national elite, and murdered them in Katyn. When the war started, the government fled and the men defending the nation were never given the call to retreat. The Polish army fought bravely even in defeat and many men joined the organized resistance to fight the Nazis themselves. Warsaw was home to two separate rebellions against German occupation as the Jewish Ghetto rose first in 1943 followed by the entire city in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. In both cases, the rebels received no help from the Russians who were actively seeking Poland's destruction while it was fighting Germany. The Russians actually made it to Warsaw's Praga district in September during the Warsaw Uprising and only needed to cross the Vistula River to help the struggling Poles. Instead, the Soviet army stood by and watched the Nazis wipe out the resistance. When the Germans put down the fighting, the Russians still did not enter the city but instead waited and observed the Nazi

forces systematically blow up every building in the capital. The Germans left only four edifices standing and Warsaw saw its pre-war population of 1.4 million fall to less than a thousand by the end of the war. As the Russian and American armies converged on Germany, the Poles' sole hope for liberation was in the promises Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill made calling for universal self-determination for all nations following the conflict.

The exiled Polish government in London would be disappointed with the West as the United Kingdom and the United States handed Poland to Stalin. US Ambassador Arthur Bliss Lane (1947) provides an account detailing Poland's betrayal by the West when Roosevelt and Churchill decided that the Atlantic Charter's "universal" self-determination and self-government provisions would not apply to Warsaw. Western political powers did not employ the post-war international principles in Eastern Europe which was prevented from gaining independence as it was given to Moscow to occupy and control. Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill awarded Polish territories east of the Curzon Line to the Soviet Union and this agreement legitimized the Soviet annexation of Polish lands from the Stalin-Hitler deal that saw Poland divided between Germany and Moscow. This second Western betrayal meant that Poland lost half of its pre-war territory as the Ukraine would be annexed by the Soviet Union. Ironically, Roosevelt and Churchill ratified the Stalin-Hitler pact that produced the invasion that started the war, but Warsaw was given some German lands in compensation. The Poles who lived in the lands now integrated into the Soviet Union had to flee or suffer death at Ukrainian hands as ethnic cleansing was present throughout Eastern Europe. In the new western lands, the Germans were mercilessly removed and the Poles who escaped the Soviet occupation would be resettled in abandoned homes and apartments. Although Poland saw itself as a nation integral to the West, the United States and Western Europe abandoned Warsaw to suffer occupation and this misery continued for forty years.

Roosevelt was facing re-election and needed Polish American voters to support him to win; however, the president had to mislead voters as he promised to defend Poland and apply the Atlantic Charter principles to Warsaw. FDR lied to the public for he had already made a deal to give Poland to Stalin and he did this without consulting the exiled Polish government. Roosevelt won the Polish vote and when the election was secured, he revealed his betrayal (Lowe 2012). Although Moscow had just carried out the largest peacetime killing of a people in history by executing the Soviet Union's Poles, Roosevelt and Churchill gave Warsaw to Russia and abandoned a friendly Western state to enemy occupation. This abandonment was inconceivable to the Poles, who saw themselves as integral to the West, as they were deserted by the states they most trusted.

## PRESENT SECURITY

The Poles maintained their Western orientation through the decades they were controlled by Moscow and when freedom came in 1989 they turned to the European Union nations and the United States for security. Warsaw's greatest fear was a Russian return that would make it relive the oppressive communist years and, therefore, it sought membership in both the EU and NATO. Europe would accept Poland but this accession would require it to open itself to Western political, social, and cultural norms. The country would gain protection from Russian aggression and receive economic and political integration into the EU, but this membership came with an unanticipated price: the attempt to mandate Western norms. After struggling to preserve its culture behind the Iron Curtain, Poland was asked to adopt a new cultural orientation which required it to adopt the dominant Western philosophical ethos. The West had become post-Christian and rejected the long-term values that the Poles had initially identified with and had struggled to preserve (Kundera 1984). Many elites within Poland had already embraced this cultural transformation so the struggle was not merely between Westerners and locals, but was already present within society. Poland was confronted with a dilemma as it had to choose between institutions that would provide security and improve its economy or to remain to face larger powers alone but to preserve its cultural autonomy.

The major Western political institutions have been stable for the first decades following the Soviet Union's collapse. NATO and the EU could have integrated Russia into their systems or extend their grasp into the former communist world and assimilate country after country into their framework. The West believed that it had won the Cold War and could impose its will on neighbors as it expanded into territory formerly under Moscow's yoke. The West used Russia's weakness, pursued the second option, and expanded NATO by twelve states (Lukin 2014) thus extending this security alliance to Russia's borders. The EU accepted even more countries as it grew to include former Soviet states. The Western secular ethos is expanding through security and economic institutions, but the internal decline of major European powers has weakened the institutions and has caused many countries to question their worth.

While Russia was a weak neighbor the security institutions appeared strong, but today NATO is more vulnerable than it was at any time since the Soviet Union's collapse. There are renewed questions within Europe about the legitimacy of the organization and there are multiple political parties in the Western states whose platform includes the position to end their country's NATO membership. A recent survey suggests that if a Baltic state were invaded by Russia, a majority in every state except Poland and the United Kingdom would not favor defending their military ally (Carter 2015). If

Russia were to invade a NATO country and Article V was invoked, leaders would have to decide between majority opposition to war and their treaty obligations. Since politicians seek to maintain their power, a response to this aggression would be minimal and not place its military capacity at risk. Thus, the very democratic institutions that the West advocates may undermine its primary security institution.

The second factor that weakens NATO is that Russia has discovered a method to wage war within a Western state that does trigger an Article V response that would generate an automatic retaliation from alliance members. Putin's operation to reclaim the Crimea unveiled a template that can be used to support military conflicts in NATO members by simply arming the Russian population already present there. Estonia and Latvia have substantial Russian populations that are also deprived of civil liberties (which in all other cases would be hypocritical for EU member states). Although the West faces major domestic problems, it is continuing to expand into Ukraine and Georgia and this has led to Russian military responses. In fact, Russian leadership came to believe that the only way to stop Western expansion into its sphere of interest was through an "iron fist" (Lukyanov 2016). Russia has expanded its military presence near Eastern Europe and has shown its willingness to oppose Western expansion through arms when necessary.

How does NATO's weakening affect Warsaw? Poland has been an active and consistent promoter within the EU and NATO for the institutions to expand membership and this has generated some opposition from Moscow (Klatt 2011). Poland shares a direct border with Russia as Kalingrad is home to Russian military bases that occasionally carry out operations where they simulate an invasion of Poland. There have been at least two operations where Moscow has simulated a nuclear attack of Warsaw. While Poland has made sacrifices to open itself up to Western influences in return for NATO's military protection, it appears that this institutional framework is weak and may not provide Poland with the promised security. Polish history shows that Western commitments to Warsaw's security are very strong until they are actually needed; when the time comes to honor their promise, the allies' pledge deteriorates to falseness or duplicity.

## THE EU AND POLAND'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

When Eastern Europe was free to integrate into Western security and economic institutions, most states sought membership within the European Union and NATO. EU membership promised development, growth, and prosperity to the newly liberated people who gave their leaders political cover to institute the reforms necessary to gain admittance. However, long-desired goals were not manifested universally within the new member states; local

economies experienced agglomeration as industries became spatially clustered within small areas. There were cities and regions where the economy improved, but the majority of people in the new EU states did not see their livelihood nor security advance; rather, they saw their economic stability weaken and in some cases decline. One particular problem was that the massive agricultural industries in the West put the family farms out of business as they could no longer sell their produce and goods to the commercial giants that controlled the retail market. The long-desired growth did not come; many parents were unable to feed their children and the rural economic areas saw poverty and difficulties increase.

Ironically, Poland is often presented as a success story for the EU because it has had many consecutive years of economic growth. Warsaw's membership was not entirely beneficial as spatial inequality increased within Polish society and Warsaw become sub-ordered to Berlin. Poland will never reach economic parity with Germany. The problem is that Warsaw's economic strength will never translate into consumer strength for families as its growth is linked to the combination of high education and low wages.

The Polish economy appears strong as employment and economic growth have been steady for the past two decades. This has not translated into high wages or an improved standard of living. Much commercial success is linked to its independent national currency, the zloty, and that Polish firms can offer below market wages to foreign firms. Although the country features one of the best global education systems, this has not translated into market-useful human capital. The low wages and highly skilled workforce make it an attractive place for foreign firms to outsource manufacturing jobs. For example, its largest export is automobile parts sent to the EU, but there is not one successful Polish car manufacturer. All the major banks operating within its borders are foreign owned. Warsaw finds its economy strongly linked to Berlin where it is included as a component supplier to large German firms (Orenstein 2014). Polish workers contributing to the same supply are paid only a fraction of what their German peers make. Berlin has pushed Poland to drop its national currency and adopt the Euro, but this is unlikely. Ironically, Berlin benefits more than Warsaw from Polish economic growth.

The new economic geography, advanced by Paul Krugman,[4] provides a theoretical framework that shows how Poland's integration in the European marketplace has not generated its own core industries able to dominate regional markets. Rather, it has found a niche making parts that are sent to regional core producers; the profits and benefits generated by the economy that remain in Poland are smaller than the returns earned by German firms and Berlin profits more from this relationship. Until recently, Warsaw's ruling party has cooperated with Poland's subservient position in Europe and argued that it has brought jobs and economic growth. This development approach makes Warsaw dependent upon Germany and means that it will

always be sub-ordered to the Western firms it supplies. The problem is that Polish workers will never have wage parity with their counterparts in the region. Any increase in wages abates the country's attractiveness to multinational firms and can potentially lower domestic employment. Since Poland's niche requires it to depress salaries, local families subordinate their good to the national economy and guarantee that Poland will have a lower standard of living than the dominant Western European states. This economic "success" story burdens families who sacrifice their well-being to make Poland an attractive place for multinational enterprises to hire cheap workers. These laborers strengthen global corporations, but do profit from an equal share in the income; this employment does not bring the desired economic freedom derived from high wages.

Poland's commercial attractiveness has not led to prosperity for workers and families fully participating in national economic life are poor relative to their peers in Western Europe. Low salaries linked to the satellite position make the demographic reality worse as Poles have fewer children than they desire because of their lower wages. One reason for Polish emigration into other European states is linked to the ability to afford children and support families. David Cameron has proposed policy changes to cut social support to the Polish families now living in the United Kingdom because they have too many children and thereby take advantage of the social welfare system. The workers who leave for Western Europe or the United States have larger families than they could support at home.

Poland successfully gained EU membership in 2004 and had experienced some economic improvement. These gains have not translated into enhanced strength for workers or families who are paid less than workers in core European states. Wages are determined by the market rather than by skills and Poland's economic prowess came from following a development path that made it competitive only by systematically accepting a lower standard of living for its workers. Germany, France, and the Netherlands have gained the greatest benefits from Warsaw's EU membership and one outcome is that the regional market guarantees that Poland will never reach economic parity with the dominant states.

## POST-NATIONALISM

Western Europe has been struggling with its own demographic crisis and its confrontation with an aging population and an insufficient worker pool to maintain social spending forced it to rely on immigration. The new arrivals have brought different languages, religions, and cultures and have not integrated within mainstream society. Because of this, the migrants are fundamentally transforming many countries in the sense that these are no longer

traditional nation-states but now are home to hybrid populations. There are areas within major European cities that have migrant majorities and most major Western European cities have neighborhoods or districts where immigrants outnumber native residents. These areas frequently have violence and crime rates far exceeding European norms and, in some cases, have become havens for terrorists, smugglers, and organized crime. Western Europe is undergoing a demographic transformation where in multiple countries the presence of immigrants has brought about profound changes to local culture.

Western European states with large migrant populations have a weakened identity and have lost their traditional national culture. Because many immigrants maintain their home culture, this failure to integrate into the host nation's way of life has damaged European civilizational unity. In looking at France, Alain Finkielkraut (2013) observes that the republic has become post-national and multicultural and this has threatened French society because instead of cultures blending and immigrants being assimilated, "Mistrust prevails, communitarianism is rampant—parallel societies are forming that continuously distance themselves from each other." While France remains geographically unchanged, the French way of life has been forever altered and this loss may be irrevocable. The new post-national experience has brought forth consequences that have not been resolved and are frequently dismissed as alarmist or racist.

The strongest European states, namely Germany and France, are already post-national and, since they are the dominant powers within the EU, they are attempting to force the policies that led to this outcome on other member states. Any resistance to the norms proposed by these two principal states is seen as intolerant and culturally unenlightened. There will always be some new resettlement in Eastern Europe due to the EU's open border policy, but the EU also tried to force refugees from the Syrian war on Poland and all member states. This mandate would fundamentally change the character of Polish cities. Since Germany and France have adopted policies that facilitate this transition, they are unable to perceive the consequences this imposition has on states that maintain their national heritage. The forced mandate to create immigrant enclaves within Eastern European states would be destructive of national unity and require these states to give up their culture and identity in the name of tolerance and acceptance.

This policy would slowly transform the Eastern European states receiving the refugees into post-national countries, thus weakening and altering their cultural identity. This EU imposition emphasizes human solidarity exclusively but does not consider the impact its policy proposals have on the common good. As a result, the fact that introducing countless immigrants into Eastern Europe will fundamentally alter local cultural life is not addressed.

Poland is a Catholic country and its response to this EU mandate should respect its religious norms. Immigration is subordinated to human dignity

which precedes the government and market, and each person should be able to move to a place where a family can be supported and raised. The difficulty, as Pope John Paul II stated, "is to combine the welcome due to every human being, especially when in need, with a reckoning of what is necessary both for the local inhabitants and the new arrivals to live in a dignified and peaceful life" (2001). This means that immigration policies need to assess the impact not only on the immigrants, but also on the local residents. A second principle is that immigrants "have the duty to integrate into the host country, respecting its laws and its national identity" (Pope Benedict XVI 2011) and that immigrants do not have the right to force their culture (or religion) on the receiving society. To the extent that Syrian refugees affect local residents and do not integrate, they weaken the bonds that unite a nation and thereby threaten the common good. Poland, or any other Eastern European country, has no moral obligation to accept refugees when this could bring about significant cultural, social, political, or economic consequences.[5] There could be an obligation to provide food and medical care in refugee camps, but it is possible to help care for vulnerable refugees without giving them residency.

The United States and Western Europe have many regions that no longer possess a dominant ethnic group or culture and where the new arrivals have mixed with the existing population so as to destroy the representative ethnic and cultural identity. The response in these areas has been to turn to cultural homogenization which resulted in the emergence of a secular and relativistic ethos that ignores the most essential questions about the human person. As a result, a materialistic society develops that no longer recognizes intrinsic or absolute moral norms and the human person is objectified and judged through cost-benefit analysis. The problem is that when a civilization is open to the most fundamental human questions, one cannot argue that the answers posed by different cultures or religions are equivalent and equally valid. It is easier for societies to ignore these questions rather than causing one group discomfort because they offer weaker responses. A post-national society is linked to philosophical skepticism and relativism because this orientation allows people to avoid uncomfortable discussions, distances them from reality, and makes them vulnerable to ideologies.

A post-national society is secular and this poses an additional challenge to Poland's Catholic identity. The Western cultural bias is that only secularism is neutral and objective and should be protected in public institutions. The irony is that this position is not neutral and this cultural prejudice reduces the ability of any religious group to influence public discourse. When a society loses its religious identity, it becomes unreasonable in that it moves to a materialist position. Its identity changes as it begins to value the immediate satisfaction of human desires and this, in turn, weakens culture as all considerations are subverted to economic reasoning. This could be considered a

form of liberal totalitarianism because when a culture values nothing intrinsically, economic concerns dominate discourse and political decision making. The leading Western European states have lost their identity and instead of recognizing their cultural crisis, they propose it as a path to liberation and seek to impose these destructive policies through EU institutions.

When Europe abandoned its faith, it also lost its culture and adopted a materialistic and de-humanizing ethos. The EU is trying to universalize these rules within all member states and Poland is in the way as long as it seeks to preserve its culture.

Neither France nor Germany is honest about the consequences their societies will face through the demographic transition that will emerge in the coming years. The post-national states in Europe may seem culturally and economically strong today, but will confront serious challenges in the future as the Muslim portion of their population grows. Michel Houellebecq (2015) provides a warning that France and other Western states may have an Islamic future that is fundamentally different from the ideological assumptions prevailing today. In his novel *Submission*, he narrates a fictional election in 2022 where a Muslim party prevails in France and looks at the consequent transformation that emerges in society as his protagonist, a literature professor at the Sorbonne, is on the verge of converting to Islam. Will the liberal policies these countries seek to impose on Eastern European states survive within their borders when the Islamic majority takes control of society? If Warsaw were to adopt the same course of action that led to a post-national reality in Western Europe, we should expect the same long-term consequences for Poland.

## GENDER IDEOLOGY

Polish intellectual history is celebrated within its own borders but ignored more broadly within the West. Historically, Poles are better than other Westerners at recognizing the philosophic origin of ideas and they see contemporary gender ideology as linked to neo-Marxism and as one stream of broader leftist philosophical thought. Poland has its own philosophical traditions (analytic, phenomenological, Thomistic) which are unique to it and distinct from similar schools in the West. The French, Germans, and Americans see their values and culture as superior and regard them as universal, thus dismissing Poland's right to adhere to its traditions when they differ from the "more advanced" West.

Historically, the United States and western democracies have seen their system as universally valid and their principles as good for all humanity. However, the West did not try to impose them until the Cold War forced Washington to turn into the global anti-communist leader (Kissinger 2014).

Because of this, the United States has tended to use the insights gained from its own internal cultural struggles as ethical norms to share or impose on the world. For example, African-Americans had to fight to gain basic civil rights through non-violent opposition and as a result of this struggle the United State has become an international advocate for minority rights and has sought to destroy all racism and discredit states or groups that support ethnic hierarchies. Poland was strongly attracted to Western soft power at this time and its Catholic nature supported policies that sought to end racism. This idea could be broadly supported by Poland and other Eastern European states where bigotry was not as prevalent as in the West partially due to its history where prior to World War I, its states contained several nationalities. When the United States was acting as an advocate against racial discrimination, it found wide support in Warsaw.

Today, the West has moved onto other areas where it has identified new forms of prejudice. First, it has sought protection for homosexuals and now it has shifted its focus to individuals with a confused sexual identity, that is, people who wish to be identified not with their biological sex but with the sex that matches their internal character and "feelings." Gender ideology is something that has recently emerged within Western societies and is now being compelled on all cultures and civilizations. To oppose this dogma requires great courage because challengers are identified in the West as bigots and proponents of hate. The West does not recognize that gender ideology is grounded in very specific philosophic cultural assumptions, namely British and American empiricism, that have no foundation in other civilizations. Gender is so foreign to Polish culture that there is no word or concept in the local language to approximate it; the Poles now use the English word which was selected as the "Word of the Year" in 2013 by representatives from the University of Warsaw and the Polish Language Foundation. Western proponents support gender as a universal good while failing to see its origin in the positivistic, empirical ethos; all cultures that present a different philosophical anthropology and metaphysic need to be transformed into one that internalizes the American and British concept.

This pressure appears as a moral obligation that targets Polish culture which features a more profound understanding of the human person rooted in the convergence of Catholic philosophy with phenomenology. To accept the Western conceptualization of gender, Poland would have to assent to a British and American empiricist anthropology and philosophic system. Ironically, this ideology was first experienced within Poland during the communist era, although it failed to take root because of Poland's strong Catholic identity, and its reemergence is reminiscent of decades of oppression (Bacur 2008; Hanson and Wells-Dang 2006; Zachorowska-Mazurkiewic 2009). The pressure placed on Warsaw is intense as it must adapt and accept the new ethos or it will be labeled as a backwards, troglodyte culture (Graff 2014).

In very difficult circumstances, religious and political groups have stepped forward to challenge the new sexual consensus.[6]

The Polish Catholic Church has taken the lead in organizing opposition to gender ideology when its bishops issued a joint pastoral letter read in all parishes in December 2013. The document states, "gender ideology is the product of many decades of ideological and cultural changes that are deeply rooted in Marxism and neo-Marxism endorsed by some feminist movements and the sexual revolution. This ideology promotes principles that are totally contrary to reality and an integral understanding of human nature. It maintains that biological sex is not socially significant. . . . According to this ideology, humans can freely determine whether they want to be men or women and freely choose their sexual orientation" (page 4). The bishops went on to state that this ideology is generating a moral crisis that will have destructive consequences for family life, society, and the entire human race (Szelewa 2014). Gender is a problematic concept because it focuses on one element of the human person and absolutizes it while neglecting and ignoring more fundamental dimensions. This criticism is rooted in Karol Wojtyła's thought, particularly *Love and Responsibility*, which shows how an integral approach to human love gets reduced to utilitarianism and leads to a focus on pleasure alone. Individual men and women become means to be used to maximize pleasure and this destroys their intrinsic value and reduces them to instruments, thus violating the personalistic norm.[7] Ironically, the Poles are being compelled through moral social engineering to embrace a philosophic position that reduces human beings to raw material used to generate physical pleasure and this objectifies them. Western thought imposes gender ideology on cultures that have a more holistic philosophic anthropology and a more holistic understanding of human relationships.

The Catholic bishops were able to influence politicians from the "United Poland" party who formed a "Stop Gender Ideology" committee with the goal of fighting the impact gender ideology has on family life and particularly in child education (Kozlawska 2014).

The West wishes to assimilate Poland and integrate it into the secular, post-Christian world. To the extent that Poland is successful in preserving its culture, it will be criticized as a radical, dangerous right-wing state for resisting Western secular influences (Graff 2014). Since the United States and Western Europe present their global vision as infallible and universally valid, no entity that opposes it has moral standing. Poland will ultimately have to choose between its Catholic identity and international legitimacy as it is pressured to adopt Western gender norms.

## NOTES

1. This chapter does not assume that Western Europe is a homogenous block where all societies are the same. However, it focuses on the cultural ethos originating in the French and German secular models that are dominating EU discourse and policymaking. The Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian societies have distinct cultures and have done a better job at preserving their cultural identity, but these states play a secondary role in the EU.

2. Michael Mandelbaum started using this quote in the late 1980s after he started visiting Poland regularly. It first appeared in print in Thomas Friedman's December 28, 2003 *New York Times* article "Where U.S. Translates as Freedom" http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/28/opinion/28FRIED.html.

3. Shlapak, David A. and Michael Johnson. *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016. http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1253.html.

4. Fujita et al. 1999; Harris 1954; Krugman 1991a, 1991b, 1991c, 1994, 1998; Mansori 2003; Martin and Sunley 1996.

5. The one region that has a moral obligation to accept Syrian war refugees would be the Sunni countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. Ironically, other than the immediately surrounding countries that already have refugees, the countries dominated by their religious brothers are unwilling to accept them. Saudi Arabia is the first country that should be receiving Sunni refugees. Instead, they have closed their borders and appear indifferent to their fate.

6. Armenia is another country where there has been domestic opposition to the gender ideology after lawmakers passed its "On Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women" that made gender intolerance illegal in 2013.

7. The personalistic norm was proposed by Kant and it states that human beings should always be employed as an end in human thought and action rather than a means to an end.

## *Chapter Five*

# Serbia

On November 21, 2013, Ukrainian president, Viktor Yanukovych, faced a monumental decision. This was a decision that would have profound implications for the future of Ukraine. He was deciding whether or not to sign an association agreement with the European Union (EU), which would increase trade ties between Ukraine and the EU. Up to that moment, Yanukovych had been trying to get concessions from both the EU and Russia by playing the two powers off of each other. However, he was playing a dangerous game. While overall he was more sympathetic to Russian interests, he was still trying to get maximum concessions from the EU to sign the association agreement.

To urge Yanukovych not to sign the association agreement, Moscow had offered concessions in terms of the price of gas that Russia sold Ukraine as well as loans to cover Ukraine's debts. The EU was not willing to offer significant financial incentives; however, it was willing to offer trade incentives that would benefit Kiev. Further, internal pressures from different factions were pushing Yanukovych to accept the association agreement with the EU. However, by November 21, 2013, Yanukovych could not put off his decision any longer. He decided not to sign the association agreement with the EU. In other words, his actions were a clear victory for Moscow against the spread of Western influence into the post-Soviet space. Moscow's victory, however, was very short lived.

Instead, internal pressure mounted, forcing Yanukovych to flee Ukraine. A new government that was not sympathetic to Russia's interests took power, causing Putin to be worried about the status of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. Putin, in turn, sent military forces into Crimea, and Russia ended up annexing Crimea. In Eastern Ukraine, protesters against the new government were aided by Russia, and a civil war ensued.

In response to Russian actions in Crimea, the United States and the EU leveled sanctions against Russia. By February, 2014, in response to Moscow aiding the rebels in Eastern Ukraine, more sanctions were imposed by the United States, the EU, and other allies of the United States. Moscow retaliated by imposing its own sanctions on the United States and the EU.

In March 2014, countries found themselves having to choose which side to support. Nowhere was this more evident than for the Balkan aspirants for EU and NATO membership. The states of Montenegro and Serbia had to decide whether or not to continue to support the EU over Russia. Montenegro chose to support the sanctions and limited its bilateral relationship with Russia, claiming that it needed to make such a move because of its obligations to the EU during EU membership talks. Serbia chose differently. Belgrade refused to join sanctions, instead proceeding with membership talks while continuing to build its economic interests with Russia (Đorđević 2014).

Belgrade continued to build a close relationship with Russia, even honoring Russian President Vladimir Putin in October 2014, with a full military parade not seen since the days of former President Josip Tito during the height of the Cold War (Filipovic, Arkhipov, and Savic 2014). While the military parade was commemorating the Soviet Union's role in liberating Serbia from German occupation during World War II, nevertheless, the symbolism of honoring Putin with such a parade given the strained relations between the EU and Russia was extremely important. Further, Putin was granted the Order of the Republic, Serbia's highest decoration, and was greeted by crowds in Belgrade, with one banner even saying "Vladimir, Save Us" (Filipovic, Arkhipov, and Savic 2014).

The parade came at a time when public support for joining the EU had begun to waiver. While over 51 percent of Serbs approved of joining the EU in January of 2014, by June, the number fell to 46 percent. By May 2015, only 41 percent supported joining the EU, with 71 percent opposed to joining the EU if the condition for entry was to accept the independence of Kosovo. Further, 80 percent of the Serbians were opposed to joining NATO. Finally, over 60 percent approved of an alliance with Russia ("Support for Serbia's EU membership fell from 56.4 to 41.1 pct—survey" 2015).

The growing influence of Russia in the Balkans in both popular support and elite support has caused consternation among European elites. For example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in November 2014, warned that Russia's meddling in the Balkans was on the rise, and that its growing influence could potentially cause problems for EU and NATO integration (Đorđević 2014). While Western European leaders have traditionally thought that their influence in Serbia was unassailable due to the carrot of EU membership, nevertheless Russian influence has continued to grow and to cause problems for the spread of European soft power. The growth of Russian influence in Serbia has confused and frustrated the European elites. In truth,

the relationship between Serbia and Russia is long and it should not be surprising that Russia's influence has been on the rise. We now turn to a discussion of the roots of Russian-Serbian relations to determine precisely how widespread Russian soft power is in Serbia.

## ROOTS OF RUSSIAN-SERBIAN RELATIONS

Relations between Russia and Serbia have never been symmetric in nature. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Serbian clergy and nobility often travelled to Moscow to request help for the Serbs since the Serbs were enslaved by the Turks (*Russia and Russians in Serbian History, Part 1* 2009). In fact, in 1556, Russian Prince Ivan the Terrible gave monks from the Khilandar monastery land in Moscow to build a monastery in Moscow. This monastery became a diplomatic mission of Serbia to Russia, where books, spiritual information, and cultural items were often brought before being shipped to monasteries in the Balkans (*Russia and Russians in Serbian History, Part 1* 2009). Many Serbians emigrated from the Balkans to escape the Turks during this period, and continued to keep attention on the plight of the Serbs.

Modern relations between Russia and Serbia began in the seventeenth century, when Patriarch Arsenije III Črnojević requested aid from Russian Tsar Peter the Great to help to liberate the Serbs from the Turks. The request convinced Peter the Great to create an active policy in the Balkans (Jovanovic 2010). Given Peter's strategy of making Russia a European empire and taking its place as one of the most important European powers, it was extremely important for Russia to develop a Balkan policy.

Peter the Great understood that not only did he need to develop a Balkan policy, but that the Serbs could be useful to his own plans to rebuild both the Russian Army and Navy to be competitive with other European powers. He made a priority of inviting many European soldiers and mariners to lead the infant Russian military forces (Riasanovsky 2000). Among the specialists invited were many Serbian experts from Dubrovnik, Herzegovina, and Montenegro to help with the navy, and a large number of Serbs from the Austro-Hungarian Empire came to serve in the Russian Army. In fact, there were so many Serbs serving in the Russian Army that Peter the Great established a special Serbian Hussar Regiment (*Russia and Russians in Serbian History, Part 1* 2009).

It is important to note two factors that led to the beginning of the relationship between Serbia and Russia. First, the Serbs requested Russia's protection from an outside power. This established an asymmetric relationship, where Russia assumed the role of patron to Serbia. Second, the delegation sent to Peter the Great was led by Patriarch Arsenije III Črnojević. He was

the Archbishop of Peć and the Patriarch of Serbs and was in favor of expelling the Turks from the Balkans, and wanted Peter to recognize him as the leader of the Serbs. However, he also felt pressure from the Austrians to declare allegiance to Austria and the Habsburg Empire. In Peter, Arsenije found a leader who shared his Orthodox faith, yet was located too far from Serbia to be able to directly influence events. Instead, Russia could become an ally of the Serbs with the idea of assuming patronage in the future as well as bringing the two peoples closer together through their shared religion. While his goal was to have Russia help defeat the Turks, he achieved a close collaboration and shared religious identity with Russia that would only be built upon further.

Even without direct Russian intervention, the Serbs rose up against the Turks, but were unsuccessful. Fearing reprisals, Arsenije III led a group of Serbs into southern Hungary, and was given sanctuary by the Austrian Empire. While this gave them a reprieve from Turkish reprisals, Arsenije felt that the Austrians were overzealous in trying to convert the Orthodox believers to Catholicism. He again appealed to the Russians, but was quickly warned by the Austrians that he would not be protected if he appealed to the Russians for help, and so he did not further ask for assistance (Petrovic 2010).

As a result of the Ottoman-Venetian War (1714–1718), the Serbs found themselves even further divided between the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, and the Austrian Habsburg Empire on the other. Patriarch Aresenije III found himself in a difficult situation. He felt his religion and the plight of the Serbs besieged by Catholicism from the Austrians, and from Islam by the Turks (Jovanovic 2010). Again, he appealed to the Russians to aid against both the Turks and the spread of Catholicism. During this period, many Serbs continued to migrate to the Russian Empire, and continued to receive a warm welcome by Peter the Great, who wanted to utilize their expertise in building up the Russian Army and Navy.

Peter the Great also was aware of the Serbian educators and monks who had arrived in Russia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and aspired to send Russian teachers to Serbia in support of literacy and to promote Orthodoxy. In fact, Metropolitan Moisei Petrovic had written a request to Peter to send Orthodox teachers to provide spiritual guidance to the Serbs who were living either in Catholic or Islam dominated territory (*Russia and Russians in Serbian History, Part 1* 2009). Peter the Great took this request very seriously, and issued a decree to provide educational assistance to Serbia in 1724.

The first Russian teacher, Maxim Suvorov, arrived in Serbia in 1725, and established a Slavic school near the Austrian military border (*Russia and Russians in Serbian History, Part 1* 2009). The school was designed to train both priests and secular teachers. Many teachers were trained, providing the foundations of Serbia's secular education system. However, even more im-

portantly, the school helped to lend even more credibility to Russia in the Balkans, and helped to spread more of Russia's soft power. Further, many Serbians who had been educated in the school and those schools whose teachers had been educated in the school chose to continue their education in Russia.

During this period, Russian influence was so strong, that many of the educated Serbs began to abandon the Serbian language in favor of a dialect that combined Russian, Serbian, and Church Slavonic. People who wished to be educated were expected to speak this dialect, and despite efforts to cleanse the language and purge the Serbian language of Russian and Church Slavonic words, nevertheless there remain elements of this dialect in contemporary literary Serbian (*Russia and Russians in Serbian History, Part 1* 2009).

Ultimately, the cultural exchange of education, language, and religion went both directions. Many Serbs had emigrated from Serbia to Russia, building important connections with the Russian elite and citizenry. Russians had also been instrumental in building the educational system of Serbia, and had spread Russian soft power to the Serbian population.

It is important to note that cultural exchange was not the only way in which Russia and Serbia became linked. As Russia grew into a greater military power under first Peter the Great and continuing under Catherine the Great, Russia was able to aid the Serb cause through military power. The Serbs continued to request military assistance throughout this period, and in 1768, the Russians decided that its military could provide support for the Serbs. A Russo-Turkish war broke out between the Russian and Ottoman Empires. While the Ottoman Empire had maintained both technological and military superiority over the Russians and many European powers, the Russians were able to achieve several important military victories, especially the Battle of Chesme in 1770. Even though the Serbs were interested in gaining their freedom from the Ottoman Empire, the Russians were mainly interested in gaining direct access to the Black Sea (Riasanovsky 2000).

One of the ways in which Russia was so effective against Turkish forces was by sending an army into Bessarabia and the Balkans. The army scored several impressive victories, but also encouraged Christians to rise up against the Turks and to help the Russian army. This was especially important to the Serbs, as they had been requesting precisely this type of assistance from the Russians.

European powers were wary of Russian power. On the one hand, they wanted the Ottoman's defeat, but they didn't want the Russians to gain too much power as that might upset the delicate balance of power in Europe. Thus, Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain offered to mediate the dispute and resolve the war. A ceasefire was begun in 1772, yet real negotiations did not begin until 1773. In 1774, the Ottoman and Russian Empires signed the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji. This treaty was a humiliating defeat for the

Ottoman Empire. It gave Russia strategic territory, and gave Russia navigation rights in Turkish waters. The Serbians, though, found themselves between two great powers. Some of the population found itself under rule by the Habsburg Empire, while others still found themselves under the control of the Ottoman Empire.

Even more important, the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji and the end of the Russo-Turkish War allowed the Russians to build a Russian Orthodox church in Constantinople as well as become protectors of all Orthodox Christians living in the Ottoman Empire (Riasanovsky 2000). This included the Serbs living in the Ottoman Empire. The importance of becoming protectors of all Orthodox Christians living in the Ottoman Empire was that it combined the cultural, religious, and military ties between Russia and Serbia. Russia assumed the role of protector in each of these facets, strengthening its soft power in Serbia in the process.

After the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji, Russia continued the role of Serbia's protector and mentor. In 1804, an uprising began by the Serbs against the Ottoman Empire. The Serbs sent a delegation to St. Petersburg to ask for aid in continuing the insurrection. The Russians offered both monetary and diplomatic support (Morison 2012). The Serbian rebels were very effective against the Ottoman army, and defeated them in several battles, and held out until the Russians began a new Russo-Turkish War (1806–1812) against the Ottoman Empire. By 1807, the Serbian insurrection had become a Serbian revolution aided by the Russian Empire. The revolution drew Serbians from all over the Balkans, and served to unite Orthodox Christians against the Turks.

The Serbian Revolution was led by Karađorđe Petrović. He was a local notable pig farmer who rose to prominence during the revolt. Due to his leadership, the Serbians were quite successful in their revolt, and with aid from the Russians, were able to create a de facto Serbian state (Jelavich 1983).

The Russo-Turkish War ended in 1812 with the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest. The Treaty of Bucharest ceded territory to Russia, but Russia also insisted that the treaty create a truce between the Ottoman Empire and the Serbs, and that further, Serbia would be granted autonomy and that the rebels would be given amnesty (Jovanovic 2010). Despite the fact that Russia was concerned with Napoleon's forthcoming invasion of Russia, and pulled out their military forces from Serbia in preparation of the attack following the Treaty of Bucharest, nevertheless Russia continued to serve as a protector of the Serbs.

The fact that Russia served as a protector of the Serbs led to stereotypes of Russia and Russians. Specifically, it developed a belief by many Serbs that Russia would always protect the Serbs over all else as though it was a mother country (Timofeev 2010). In 1877, Russia lived up to being the

protector of the Serbs by leading a coalition of several Balkan de facto countries in a new war against the Ottoman Empire. The war was successful, and as a result, the principalities of Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania gained their official independence through both the Treaty of San Stefano and the Treaty of Berlin. In addition, the Principality of Bulgaria also got its freedom from these two treaties.

While Russia did help Serbia to formally achieve its independence, it quickly turned its political aspirations from Serbia to Bulgaria. By doing this, Russia was leaving Serbia to the Austrian sphere of influence (Jovanovic 2010). Many Serbs took Russia's pivot to mean that it would no longer be the protector of the Serbs. Other Serbs, who understood geopolitical interests, appreciated prior efforts by Russia at protecting the Serbs and understood its pivot towards Bulgaria. However, Russia's pivot effectively created two approaches to Russia by Serbs: Russophobes, who blamed Russia for turning away from protecting the Serbs, and Russophiles, who still loved Russia for the protection that it had offered in the past (Timofeev 2010). The Russophobes allowed their sympathies for Russia to turn into phobias. As Serbian elites became more tied to European elites through business and cultural ties, their phobias affected the perceptions of other European elites towards Russia. Russophiles, on the other hand, continued to perpetuate a myth of Russian protection of the Serb people, and spread the word of Russia as a savior. Thus, both the Serbian elite and the Serbian citizenry were extremely divided in their perceptions of Russia. However, overall, Serbian relations with Russia significantly cooled following Russia's pivot to Bulgaria.

Relations did not improve between Russia and Serbia again until 1903 when Peter Karađorđević, the grandson of Karađorđe Petrović, was elected by the Serbian parliament to be the new king of Serbia. King Peter I had been living in exile prior to being chosen king. The new Karađorđević dynasty had ties to Russia, and therefore, relations between the two states began to improve, peaking in 1914 when Tsar Nicholas II gave support to Serbia against an ultimatum given by Austria-Hungary following the assassination of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand.

Russia's commitment to Serbia led Russia into World War I, which in turn led to fighting Germany, an ally of Austria-Hungary. Russia was ill-equipped for war against Germany, and had neither the necessary weapons nor equipment to wage modern warfare (Riasanovsky 2000). Germany quickly took advantage of Russia's weakness, and Russia found itself losing the war. While Russian factories began to increase production due to the military demand for weapons, they were not able to increase production quickly.

It is interesting to note that Nicholas II had every reason not to protect the Serbs. Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany was a cousin of his, and he believed very strongly in family ties. However, Nicholas II also was very religious as well

as a Slavophile, and believed that he had a religious duty to protect the Serbs from Austria-Hungary and by extension its ally, Germany.

As Russian military casualties continued to mount, people were asked to sacrifice for the war effort. Famine ensued, and discontent rose among the populace. Further, Russia faced decreasing morale among its military. In an effort to increase troop morale, Nicholas II went to the front lines to lead the war effort personally (Riasanovsky 2000). Despite an improvement in morale, discontent was growing domestically, and support for Nicholas II fell from the landed gentry, the aristocracy, and the peasants. Many different revolutionary groups were taking advantage of the government's focus on the war effort to organize and to further foment revolutionary fervor.

Despite the fact that Nicholas II had celebrated the tercentenary of the Romanov dynasty in 1913 amid much national jubilation, a mere four years later, a revolution deposed Nicholas II and established a provisional government. The provisional government continued fighting the war, and was unsuccessful in calming the situation. Instead, in October of 1917, a new revolution, led by Vladimir Ilych Lenin, was successful in overthrowing the new provisional government. A bloody civil war followed as those who were opposed to Lenin fought against him. Ultimately, Lenin and the Communists won the civil war, having killed Nicholas II and consolidated power.

The Russian Revolution and ensuing civil war led to a complete break in relations with Serbia. While King Peter I of Serbia died before the Russian Revolution, his son, King Alexander I, had been educated in Russia, and was allied with the Tsarist regime. With the fall of the Russian Empire, King Alexander I severed all political ties with the successor state to the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union (Jovanovic 2010).

Up until the Russian Revolution, relations between Russia and Serbia resembled a pendulum. Until the pivot to Bulgaria, Russia was seen as Serbia's protector. Not only were there religious ties, but Russia actively supported both Serbia and the Orthodox faith against the Ottoman Empire. However, after the pivot to Bulgaria, many Serbs felt betrayed by Russia. While they still felt culturally tied to Russia, many resented the fact that Russia had turned its back on Serbia. However, Tsar Nicholas II again picked up the mantle of protector of the Serbian peoples by defending the Serbians even in the face of certain war with Germany. The pendulum had again swung to the Serbians approaching their relationship with Russia in an almost reverential fashion.

Due to the asymmetric power structure between the two states, the historical relationship up until the Russian Revolution served as the basis of Russian soft power in Serbia. Like the relations between Serbia and Russia played out like a pendulum, so too did Russian soft power. That is not to say that a historical relationship completely determines soft power, but due to Russia's unique position as a protector of the Serbian people, Russian soft

power until the Russian Revolution mirrors the pendulum of the relationship between the two states. Ultimately the foundation of Russian soft power in Serbia lies in not only the historical relationship between the two states, but also a shared cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage. Each of these four aspects of Russian soft power combine to form a very cohesive and powerful Russian soft power in Serbia. However, due to the pendulum of relations, Russian soft power also ebbed and flowed in Serbia. Its foundations, though, remained strong from the fifteenth through the early nineteenth centuries.

Following the Russian Revolution and through World War II, the Soviet Union was not able to reinvigorate its soft power in Serbia. Serbia had completely cut off relations with the Soviet Union, and thus the Soviet Union's soft power entered a nadir. However, following World War II, Josip Tito, the leader of Yugoslavia,[1] and Josef Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union tried to patch up the relationship between the two countries. Their rapprochement was short lived, as the two leaders had a falling out. Up until the end of the Cold War, Soviet soft power remained in its nadir. With the end of the Cold War and the reemergence of Russia as the successor state to the Soviet Union, Russian soft power again began to grow in Serbia. We now turn to a discussion of Russian soft power and the relationship between Russia and Serbia following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

## RUSSIAN SOFT POWER IN SERBIA FOLLOWING THE COLLAPSE OF YUGOSLAVIA AND THE SOVIET UNION

In 1991, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union stood in stark contrast to one another. One country, Yugoslavia was about to totally disintegrate into a bloody civil war. In contrast, the Soviet Union was about to dissolve relatively peacefully into fifteen new countries. On the one hand, there are many similarities between the two countries. First of all, they were both transitioning out of communism, they both had significant ethnic diasporas living in the federal regions of each respective country, and they both had one republic that was dominant over the others. In the case of Yugoslavia, the dominant republic was Serbia, and in the case of the Soviet Union, the dominant republic was Russia. However, the elites in Russia were willing to peacefully dissolve the Soviet Union, while the Serbian elites were not willing to let Yugoslavia dissolve peacefully and let ethnic Serbs living in the other republics be at the mercy of the elites of new countries (Vujačić 2015). Russian elites, while vocally urging the protection of ethnic Russians in the former Soviet republics, ultimately decided that there was nothing specific that could be done to protect those Russians who decided to stay in the newly independent country. Serbian elites, on the other hand, enticed Serbian citi-

zens living in the former Yugoslavian republics to actively rebel against their new national governments (Vujačić 2015).

In 1990, Serbian President Slobodan Milošević had increased nationalist fervor in Serbia through a nationalist rhetoric extolling the heritage of the Serbs and their Slavic roots. Other republics in Yugoslavia distanced themselves from Milošević, and in 1991, they declared independence from Yugoslavia. Milošević's nationalist rhetoric enticed Serbs living in the newly independent states to rise up against other ethnicities. Following several incidents between different ethnicities, war broke out, first in Croatia, and then in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The nationalist rhetoric made the Balkan wars some of the bloodiest conflicts since World War II. Where the 1984 Winter Olympics had been held in Sarajevo, by 1992, the streets of Sarajevo became kill zones as snipers holed up in the hills surrounding the city ready to shoot common civilians trying to make their livings (Mujkic 2002). Genocide again returned to the European continent and caused panic among both EU and NATO member states, as they had just celebrated the end of the Cold War and the triumph of capitalism and liberal democracy over communism.

As NATO geared up to try to resolve the conflicts, Milošević used the pan-Slavic as well as shared cultural and religious ties to appeal to Russia for support against the growing likelihood of Western intervention. Russian President Boris Yeltsin cautioned the West against interfering in the Balkan conflicts, yet also wanted Western support for his reforms in Russia. He needed money and investment in Russia, and thus was constrained from actively supporting Milošević in the conflicts.

Russian politicians in the Duma[2] turned against Yeltsin over his embrace of the West even over traditional ties between Serbs and Russians. Further, many critics of Yeltsin believed that Russia should have a leader like Milošević who would not allow ethnic Russians to suffer in newly independent states. Their goal was to change Russian foreign policy into a more nationalist direction, specifically urging Russians to rise up against the majority ethnic groups in the newly independent states as well as help the Serbs against the West (Jackson 2003).

Support for the Serbs in the Balkan wars was not limited to Russian politicians. Many individuals supported the Serbs even though Yeltsin did not officially support them. Volunteer military units were assembled among veterans of the war in Afghanistan, especially among the former *spetsnaz* (Russian special-forces) troops. The volunteer units joined with Bosian Serb military units against the Bosnian forces (Gusinov 2002). NATO forces began a bombing campaign against Bosnian Serbs, responding to the many atrocities that it saw being committed against Bosnians by Bosnian Serbs.

By 1995, Moscow found a more united voice against NATO bombing of Bosinan Serb forces. Partially due to pressure from Moscow, mediation ef-

forts increased, and a cease-fire was declared in Bosnia in October 1995. Moscow sent peace-keeping forces to Bosnia to aid in protecting the fragile cease-fire. Much to the consternation of NATO member states, Moscow was very quick in preventing Western peacekeeping forces from having full military control over Bosnia.

In Serbia, Milošević was viewed as betraying Bosnian Serbs, and began to lose popularity. Despite losing popularity, Milošević used a tactic of defeating other parties and their elites before they could effectively challenge him so that there was no viable alternative to his leadership (Gordy 2010). In other words, Milošević was less interested in following the will of the people and more interested in preventing challengers from developing.

Milošević also used nationalist rhetoric claiming that the West was attacking Serbia and resurrected the ideas of both Catholicism and Islam attacking Serbia and Serbian Orthodoxy. Appealing again to Russia, Milošević was able to gain support for his policies and begin to try to cultivate Moscow again as the protector of the Serbian people.

With the end of the Bosnian conflict, Kosovar Albanians began an insurrection in Kosovo against Belgrade in 1996. This was followed by armed conflict between the two sides in 1998. NATO quickly tried to instate a cease-fire between the two sides, but very quickly the cease-fire broke down and hostilities broke out. Again, atrocities ensued, with the Kosovo conflict being extremely bloody with much violence being directed toward civilians. The number of the atrocities spurred the Western states into taking direct action, and NATO began a bombing campaign against Serbia.

The NATO campaign against Serbia during the Kosovo war was the first time that NATO had used force without getting approval from the United Nations Security Council (Garcia-Orrico 2009). Nevertheless, the NATO bombing campaign continued against the Serbian military and Serbia itself. After seventy-eight days of bombing and pressure from Moscow, Belgrade accepted a cease-fire. On June 10, 1999, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution paving the way for UN peacekeeping forces to go into Kosovo to protect the Kosovar Albanians from the Serbs. Russian military forces were allowed to take part in the peacekeeping forces. Milošević was blamed for losing Kosovo by the Serbians, and was charged by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) with war crimes (including genocide).

During this time period, Russian soft power was increasing at a greater speed in Serbia than it was among the post-Soviet states. The Serbian people accepted Moscow's role, and wanted Moscow to be able to protect them more from what they saw as Western aggression toward traditional Serbian values and beliefs as well as a direct attack on ethnic Serbs.

While Moscow's soft power was growing, Milošević's popularity plummeted. Following a disputed presidential election on September 24, 2000,

demonstrations broke out against him. He had claimed victory in the election, but the public didn't believe the results. The demonstrations were so strong that he was forced to resign. A new government replaced Milošević, and they began to seek to mend relations with Washington and the EU that had been so broken during the Milošević era.

The West began to pressure the new government in Belgrade, and even tied US government aid to Serbia to Belgrade giving up Milošević. Thus, on March 31, 2001, after a long standoff, Milošević was arrested ("Milosevic arrested" 2001). The new Serbian government decided to extradite him to the ICTY to face trial for war crimes.

Western governments claimed that approximately 90 percent of the atrocities and genocide in Boznia and Herzegovina had been committed by Bosnian Serbs, with help from Serbian elites (Mestrovic 2013). With atrocities unheard of since World War II, the crimes committed during the Balkan Wars were astounding. The ICTY seemed eager to try Milošević. Claiming that the ICTY was not a legitimate court since it had not been created by the United Nations General Assembly, Milošević refused representation. Instead, he decided to represent himself. On March 26, 2006, Milošević died in his prison cell in The Hague, thus ending his trial.

In addition to the ICTY, Bosnia requested that Serbia be tried in the ICJ for war crimes. Despite the fact that Belgrade was cleared of war crimes, the ICJ found that the Serbian elites had not done enough to prevent mass killings. This was especially true of the massacre at Srebrenica as well as many other massacres in both Bosnia and Kosovo (Hudson 2007).

Despite the death of Milošević and the decision of the ICJ, the situation in Kosovo was still far from settled. The cease-fire had held, but the Kosovar Albanians still wanted to declare independence from Serbia. International negotiations began on the final status of Kosovo in 2006. Serbia's territorial claim over Kosovo was still recognized as legitimate, yet the majority of the population of Kosovo wanted freedom. When negotiations stalled, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia. Serbia immediately declared the declaration to be illegal, and maintained the inviolability of its own state borders. While the United States and the EU member states recognized the independence of Kosovo, many countries including Russia refused to accept the legitimacy of Kosovo's independence. Additionally, many observers worried that Kosovo's independence would be a dangerous precedent, and indeed, the precedent has been cited in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, and Crimea in Ukraine.

Despite the stance of the EU and Western states on Kosovo, Belgrade continued to try and improve relations with the West. Recognizing that it needed access to European markets, Belgrade signed an accession agreement with the EU in 2007, beginning the negotiation process for joining the EU. With that agreement, Serbia became a candidate country to the EU. While

many Serbians still looked at Russia as being a protector, Belgrade clearly turned in a pivot to Europe, isolating Russia and its past shared history. However, does that mean that Western soft power is stronger than Russian soft power in Serbia? We now turn to a discussion on Western soft power in Serbia.

## WESTERN VERSUS RUSSIAN SOFT POWER IN SERBIA

Despite wanting access to Western markets and respect from Western Europe, Serbians tend to have a very wary view of the West. First, Serbians believed that the West is against Serbia and that it is really Serbia's enemy (Charskiy 2016). They believe this especially because of how the West handled the Kosovo declaration of independence. One of the common questions they have asked is if all countries have the legal right to declare their own independence, then why didn't the Bosnian Serbs have a right to declare their independence from Bosnia? What they see is that the West has a double standard towards Serbia and its eventual membership in the European Union.

While common citizens are Euroskeptic, the Serbian elite has been going against the prevailing opinions of the citizens and pursuing a pro-European policy. Further, the West has been very effective at pursuing and expanding its soft power in Serbia. Until the early 2000s, the West had completely outmaneuvered Russia in pursuing soft power strategies in Serbia. Western soft power is extremely well organized and financed, and not only influences the Serbian elite, but also controls mainstream media and most of the NGOs operating in Serbia (Charskiy 2016). Interestingly, despite having a highly coordinated soft power strategy, the West could never fully influence public opinion. In fact, in 2015, a majority of Serbs were opposed to Serbia pursuing EU membership, and even more were opposed to the prospect of Serbia joining NATO ("Support for Serbia's EU membership fell from 56.4 to 41.1 pct—survey" 2015).

The support of Serbia's citizens toward the EU mirrored that of the citizens of many of the member states of the EU. Increasingly, citizens across the EU had become more skeptical of the EU and this had a huge effect on Western soft power in Serbia. We now turn to a discussion of Euroscepticism and its effect on Western soft power.

## EUROSKEPTICISM IN WESTERN EUROPE

The European Union has been a big success at integrating states economically. Having begun as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the original idea of the European community was to lessen the tensions between the European powers following World War II. Europe had been ground zero

for two world wars in the twentieth century, and the ECSC was seen as a way to foster cooperation so that the European states could move beyond the conflictual relations that had dominated much of their existence to a more cooperative relationship that would lead to a peaceful continent.

While integration at first proceeded at a relatively slow pace at the beginning, nevertheless, the European states began to integrate. The pattern seemed to be many years of little action followed by a huge leap forward. This pattern was repeated several times as Europe began to slowly morph into the EU. The first major step beyond the ECSC was in 1957, with the Treaty of Rome. The Treaty of Rome established the European Economic Community (EEC) and a European Customs Union. Both of these were a huge leap forward from the ECSC.

The whole goal of the EEC was to create closer efforts at integrating the economies of European states. It was understood by the elites that integrating the economies would not only create more wealth for the European states, but would also continue to create more opportunities to ensure a peaceful European continent.

Despite some initial hesitation by member states to EEC policies, in 1961, the EEC was enlarged as Denmark, Ireland, Norway, and the United Kingdom applied to join the EEC. French President Charles De Gaulle was very skeptical of British membership, and vetoed the membership of those states. However, in 1967, the countries reapplied to the EEC as a new French president took office.

It was around this time that a major theme of European enlargement began to develop. While Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom successfully joined the EEC by 1973, Norway held a referendum in 1972, and the Norwegian people rejected Norway's plans to join the EEC. Thus, while European enlargement was successful, there seemed to be a clear gap developing between the elites in those countries and the public, who were asked to go along with plans of the enlargement of the EEC.

One of the difficulties that the EEC had to overcome was the establishment of the European Parliament, which should be directly elected by the people. The Treaty of Rome had established the need for a parliament, but had not specified how one would be established. Previously, there had been assemblies that had been held, but they had not been directly elected by the public. Finally, by June 1979, elections were held in all of the member states for members of parliament, and the new parliament became a permanent parliament, thus institutionalizing the legislative branch of the EEC. The direct election of a permanent parliament allowed not only the creation of a new permanent parliament, but also allowed the parliament to be more active than previous assemblies had been.

One of the most important agreements that came out of the EEC was signed in 1985, near the town of Schengen, Luxembourg. The Schengen

Agreement stated that member states would agree to gradually lessen border controls between member states. The idea was that this would increase trade opportunities between the states as they got rid of border checkpoints. Further, they agreed to work towards visa-free travel between the member states, ensuring that the movement of goods and people would be free from restriction. By 1990, the Schengen zone, as the territory of the member states who signed the Schengen Agreement was known, operated much like a state, where there was little control over movement within the internal borders of the Schengen zone.[3]

During this period of time the European Community continued to expand its membership, and in 1991, the member states agreed to allow further integration, agreeing to sign the Maastricht Treaty. The Maastricht Treaty officially established the European Union (EU). The EU became an integrated organization, assuming supranational powers and forcing member states to adhere to EU regulations.

It is important to note that the elites have been pushing European integration. While at first the public approved of integration, the more that the EU grew, the more dissatisfied the public became with EU institutions and regulations. Two main connected aspects of the EU combined to increase Euroskepticism. The first was seen as the democratic deficit in the EU, which is when the main decision makers for the EU moved from being the member states to the EU permanent institutions. Citizens felt as though the EU institutions lacked democratic legitimacy because the member states could not control the decisions. They argued that if citizens could vote for EU policies, then the EU would not have a democratic deficit.

The second major aspect of the EU organizational design structure that led to increased Euroskepticism was that citizens of EU member states believed that as the EU became stronger as a supranational organization, that their own member states were losing their sovereignty. Because member states had to abide by EU regulations, then sovereignty did not reside with the nation-state, but rather, states had ceded their sovereignty to the EU.

It is important to note that both of these criticisms of the EU are very similar and address the same fundamental aspects of organizational design. In both cases, the complaint lies in how the EU makes decisions; the difference really lies in process. For those that object to the democratic deficit, the objection is not that EU institutions are making decisions that impact nation-states, but rather that the public does not have much voice in the decisions that the EU institutions make. Much of the EU institutional structure is not democratically elected, and therefore people argue that the EU lacks democratic principles of decision making.

Those that are against the EU institutional decision making process from a nation-state perspective oppose it because the member states have ceded their sovereignty to the EU. They resent the EU institutions, and claim that

foreign organizations are exerting too much power over the nation-state, and that it is wrong to do so. They argue that the EU has become a bloated organization that no longer serves the interests of the member states, but rather serves its own interests at the expense of its member states. In short, both the democratic deficit argument and the argument about ceding the sovereignty of the nation-state to the EU, combine to create a very powerful sense of skepticism towards the EU.

While initially a question of the democratic deficit, Euroskepticism has increased and become a major issue for all EU member states. First, Euroskepticism has become a question of geography, where fissures have developed between European countries in Northern Europe compared to those countries in Southern Europe. Northern European countries such as Germany had economies which were much stronger than those in Southern Europe, and citizens of the Northern European countries began to resent the fact that the EU was sending money from the Northern European states to the Southern European states. Governments from the Northern European states believed that due to the fact that their economies were stronger than those in the South, that they should have a stronger voice in EU policy making. For example, citizens of the Czech Republic believe that membership in the EU is a "marriage of convenience," that can provide prosperity and security. However, as the economic situation in the EU has worsened, they receive neither prosperity nor security. Further, many are happy that they were not members of the single currency and thus did not have to bail out many Southern EU member states. In the Czech Republic, citizens went from a net of 79 percent support for the EU in 2007 to a net of 53 percent support in 2012 (Torreblanca and Leonard 2013).

In contrast to the Northern EU member states, the Southern EU member states resent the fact that the Northern states felt as though they had a right to dictate EU policy for the Southern states. After 2012, as economies further weakened in Southern EU member states, the EU imposed austerity measures to try to bring Southern EU member states' economies in line with those of Northern EU member states. Germany led the charge of EU member states to impose these austerity measures. However, the austerity measures further weakened the economies, and led to rising discontent among Southern EU member states such as Italy and Greece. In Greece, for example, net support for the EU fell from 76 percent in 2007 to 13 percent in 2012 (Torreblanca and Leonard 2013).

The rise in Euroskepticism led to the formation of many nationalist parties trying to promote nationalism over the EU. This was due in large part to both the democratic deficit as well as the idea that the EU was forcing member states to accept more and more refugees, thus worsening the economies in the member states. As unemployment increased, the nationalist parties gained more and more power and appeal. One of the best examples of a

nationalist party in Europe that has found success in elections has been the Freedom Party of Austria, which has had tremendous success in parliamentary elections, and its leader, Norbert Hofer, ran for president and even received a plurality of the vote in the first round of the presidential election in 2016.

In addition to the rise of nationalist parties, the financial crisis of 2008 and continuing financial difficulties have led to increased calls for member states to either leave the Eurozone or the EU itself. For example, in 2015, Greece was dealing with a financial crisis of epic proportions. The austerity measures required by both the EU and the IMF had really hurt the Greek economy further. Greece had requested a bailout from the EU or it would have to default on its loans. The bailout was not given, and Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras called for a referendum to decide whether or not Greece would accept the most recent bailout conditions called for by both the EU and the IMF. The referendum resoundingly defeated the bailout conditions with over 61 percent voting against the bailout conditions.

The rejection of the bailout conditions led to speculation that Greece would exit the Eurozone and would default on its loans. However, despite the results of the referendum, Tsipras agreed to new austerity measures and continued to ensure that Greece would remain both a member of the Eurozone as well as the EU. However, despite this decision, Euroskepticism remains very high in Greece and was only fueled further by Euroskepticism in other countries such as the United Kingdom.

Similar to Greece, Euroskepticism was extremely high in the United Kingdom (UK). For many years, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) had been steadily rising in power during elections. In the 2004 European elections, it placed third, yet a mere decade later, UKIP placed first in the European elections. UKIP's platform was Euroskeptic, and it consistently urged the United Kingdom to secede from the European Union, urging those in power to hold a referendum to allow citizens of the UK to decide whether or not they wanted the UK to remain a member of the EU. In 2013, UKIP was successful in forcing Prime Minister David Cameron to accept for a call for a referendum on whether or not the United Kingdom should remain in the European Union. He promised to hold the referendum no later than 2017. In a speech to the House of Commons in February 2016, David Cameron promised that the referendum would be held on the 23rd of June, 2016.

In the buildup to the referendum, those in favor of leaving the EU argued that the UK would be better off leaving and regaining their national sovereignty. They mirrored many of the arguments that had been consistently voiced by Euroskeptics. Those who wanted the UK to stay in the EU argued that the UK would miss out on all of the economic benefits of remaining in the EU. While the vote was incredibly close, approximately 51 percent of the

votes cast were in favor of leaving the EU; 48 percent of the votes were in favor of remaining in the EU.

While the UK voted to leave the EU, important fissures developed within the UK about exiting the EU. Specifically, one of the most important fissures was between Scotland and England, with Scotland voting overwhelmingly to remain with the EU, while England voted in favor of exiting. These results have led some to question whether or not Scotland will again seek its independence from the UK. In other words, by the UK voting to leave the EU, the UK created a situation that creates more pressure on the nation-state, threatening to break apart the state.

While Euroskepticism is a large cause of the pushback from EU member states, a larger cause of the anti-EU sentiment has to do with a skepticism over the liberal values and postmodernist philosophy espoused by the EU and the West. For example, Hungary and Poland had already elected governments that challenged liberal democratic values. In Hungary, the government held up the Russian model and stated that it was in favor of the illiberal or sovereign democracy that Russia supported.

However, the pushback against liberal values didn't only take place in Europe. In 2016, Donald Trump rose up with a populist message, arguing that the liberal economic values and postmodernist values embraced by the United States elites were no longer useful. He argued that the United States should not work to spread democracy, but instead should begin a new period of isolationism. He argued that the United States needed to build a wall on the Mexican border to prevent immigration, and that the United States should impose a ban on Muslim immigrants and refugees in an effort to protect the United States from terrorism. Further, he argued that liberal economic values through trade were outdated, and that the United States needed to stop pursuing free trade agreements with other states. In addition, he stated that NATO was an outdated organization, and that the European member states had to do more to provide for their own defense. He argued that if he were to be elected president, that the United States would revisit its support of NATO and providing for the European defense. Finally, he argued that nuclear proliferation was not a problem as that would ensure that states could provide for their own security as opposed to having the United States provide for their security.

Trump's opponent in the election of 2016, Hillary Clinton, argued that the status quo should continue. She defended liberal economic and postmodern values, and essentially made the election a referendum on this issue. While both Trump and Clinton became mired in personal attacks, the larger picture was that the election was about the future of American foreign policies as the global hegemon and the defender of liberal economic and postmodern values. Ultimately, Clinton won the popular vote, but Trump won the Electoral College vote, ensuring that he won the presidency. Donald Trump identified

the skepticism of the public of both liberal economic and postmodern values, and was able to utilize this skepticism to win the presidency. It remains to be seen whether Donald Trump will follow through on his promises and change the liberal postmodern value structure of the United States; however, the important thing is that he identified a skepticism from the citizens about those values, and caused people to question whether those values should be pursued and spread around the world.

Despite increasing Euroskepticism and the challenge to liberal and postmodern values in Europe as well as the United States, Western Europe still worked hard to spread its soft power by dangling EU membership to European elites. The prospect of the economic benefits of EU membership has convinced elites in many European states to change and internalize policies that the European Union champions, often at the expense of traditional values and history (Slobodchikoff 2010). Such is the case in Serbia, where EU soft power strategies have long been utilized by the EU to try to create a rift between Serbia and Russia. Instead, a rift has developed between the Serbian elites and the common Serbian citizens, who are more skeptical of the EU, and don't strive for membership in the EU. Thus, a fundamental democratic deficit has appeared between the Serbian elites and the regular citizens. It is important to note that Euroskepticism has had an important effect on Euroskepticism in Serbia. Despite the fact that the elites in Serbia believe that they can benefit economically from the EU, by 2015, a majority of the citizens in Serbia were opposed to EU membership.

In contrast to Western soft power strategies, Russia has only recently pursued soft power strategies in Serbia. However, there seems to be fairly little coordination. For example, the Russian government created an office to provide disaster relief to Serbia (Robinson 2014). Further, Moscow has helped to restore Russian war cemeteries and open Russian language centers and monuments (Đorđević 2014; Feklyunina 2008; Robinson 2014; Szpala 2014). Yet Russian efforts at spreading Russian soft power have remained uncoordinated. The different attempts at spreading soft power in Serbia have not been effectively coordinated to produce the maximum gain.

One surprising aspect of the lack of coordinated strategy in spreading Russian soft power is the fact that RT, the Russian broadcast news station, does not broadcast in Serbian. However, there is a version of the Sputnik news agency which provides news in Serbian as well as several other smaller websites that provide news from Russia in Serbian. However, these news programs are fairly new. For example, both the Serbian version of Sputnik news as well as the Russian News Front Agency have only been in operation since 2015. Most of the Serbian websites that provide news usually rely on Western news sources, especially when writing about news that is happening related to Russia. However, many Serbians prefer to get news related to Russia from Russian sources as opposed to Western sources (Charskiy

2016). It should be noted that the Sputnik news and Russian News Front Agency are focused on presenting current news.

Two other news and information sites do not only focus on current events. The website pravoslavie.ru focuses on Orthodox Christianity. It also has both a Russian version and a Serbian version of the website. Many of the articles on the site focus on religious teachings, the lives of saints, and information that is geared towards a more religious audience. Several articles talk about the shared religious history between the Serbians and the Russians.

In addition to pravoslavie.ru, Russia Beyond the Headlines (RBTH) is an important strategy for Russian soft power. RBTH is a project financed by *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, and partners with other news organizations to provide interesting news about Russia. Some of the news might be current events, but often RBTH focuses on Russian history, culture, and so on. RBTH adapts its approach to spreading Russian soft power in different ways depending on different preferences of readers in different countries. In contrast to RT, RBTH is published in Serbian, and its Serbian website is one of its most popular. In 2015 alone, the Serbian RBTH website had over 900,000 visits and more than 270,000 unique readers per month (Charskiy 2016).

Russian soft power in Serbia is still weak in comparison to Western soft power. Yet Serbians seem to be more receptive to Russian soft power strategies than European soft power. This is most probably due to the fact that Russia and Serbia have so much shared history and culture that there is much Russian soft power that is a latent force ready to be released. However, until the Russian government can effectively coordinate a soft power strategy in Serbia, Russia's soft power will continue to be more latent than active. Currently, it is in Russia's interest to have Serbia join the EU, as Russia will then be able to use Serbia as a conduit with the Europeans. Russia could sell their goods in the EU through Serbia as well as trade through Serbia. Further, if the South Stream project for shipping natural gas through Serbia to the EU becomes a reality, both Russia and Serbia stand to gain tremendously.

Despite the fact that Russian efforts at soft power in Serbia have overall been fairly weak, Euroskepticism in Europe as a whole and Serbia specifically provides a unique avenue for Russia to exploit. Russian soft power does not need to convince Serbians to oppose the EU by providing a positive image of Russian soft power and focusing on cultural ties and shared history. Instead, Russia could focus on Euroskepticism and presenting the EU in a negative light. By doing so, Russia would increase Euroskepticism within Serbia, and would put pressure on both Serbian elites as well as the EU. By showing the problems with Western philosophy and soft power, Russia stands to gain tremendously vis-à-vis Western Europe. Even if the elite continue to be swayed by Western soft power strategies, the cost that Moscow bears for sowing seeds of doubt among ordinary citizens is very low, making it a worthwhile endeavor for Moscow to undertake.

However, despite the low cost of fomenting discontent and increasing fissures between the citizens and elites in the West over core Western values, Russia also must work to provide a positive image of itself as the defender of traditional values over liberal and postmodern values. Many Serbians find this attractive even if Russia has not had a coordinated positive soft power strategy. Moscow has discovered that fomenting discontent and challenging the West's values are very powerful tools in its arsenal of challenging US hegemony and gaining influence in Eastern Europe. The true question will lie in whether or not Moscow can transform skepticism and discontent with Western values and convert them into positive support for Russia. If they can, then Serbia and indeed most of Eastern Europe will again become a contested geographical space between the West and Russia, creating the conditions for a new ideological cold war between the two powers.

Ultimately, it is difficult to fully assess the effectiveness of Russian soft power in Serbia due to the fact that it is only starting to become strategically used by Moscow in Serbia. However, with Serbia joining the EU, the latent aspect of Russian soft power could eventually become a Trojan horse to the EU should Russian soft power become a potent force and be used against Europe. As yet, Russian soft power strategies in Serbia are still in their infancy.

## NOTES

1. Following World War I, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes merged into one Kingdom of Yugoslavia under the Karađorđević Dynasty. In 1945, following World War II, Yugoslavia became communist, and was ruled by Josip Broz Tito until his death in 1980. Following World War II, Yugoslavia was a federation composed of six republics, with borders determined along ethnic lines.
2. The Russian Parliament.
3. It should be noted that while the Schengen Agreement was negotiated within the EEC, it wasn't considered mandatory for all member states of the EEC. It wasn't until 1999 that the Schengen Agreement was incorporated into the EU with the Treaty of Amsterdam.

*Chapter Six*

# Soft Power and Western Cultural Decay

Historically, the West's economic, political, and cultural life made it attractive globally and this easily allowed it to advocate its positions and defend its recommendations. It is no longer taken for granted that Washington's or Europe's counsel is superior to alternative perspectives as the West has suffered from weak economic growth, birth-rates too low to support its pension system, and the East Asian manufacturing rise. As a result, the policy suggestions coming from the United States, the EU, the IMF, or the World Bank are less certain given that the major actors making them have vulnerable economies. Although the current Western standard-of-living is something developing states seek, the recent economic failures and the unpromising future mean that the West is no longer perceived as having the knowledge to preserve its own prowess. The West is insistent on imposing its economic norms on emerging market states, but there are less reasons for countries to implement them.

The Western image was damaged through its excessive reliance on military force and its willingness to coerce other states to participate when sanctioning adversaries. The 2003 Iraq War did irreparable damage to the United States' image and placed its credibility in doubt. The Bush administration articulated several reasons for the invasion and Iraqi occupation that were unfounded or intentionally deceptive. When the war started, it was opposed by a majority in every country globally except for the United States and Israel; this included the United Kingdom, Spain, Poland, and all other states that actually participated in the conflict. As the war unfolded, it was apparent that the strategic planning for managing the occupation was a failure as there was no arrangement to transition control to a local government. The inability to include the Sunni population saw the development of an internal insurgen-

cy that embarrassed the United States for years. The US occupation never generated stability or security for the local population and in the years that followed there was sufficient chaos to allow ISIS to emerge. The most important US foreign policy decision made in the new millennium has been a disaster for the Middle East and for Washington and this has lent credibility to those wishing to challenge Western leadership.

Western powers are universal advocates for democracy, but recent revelations have shown that the United States has failed to abide by the very norms it promotes. The documents released by WikiLeaks and the NSA papers disclosed to journalists by Edward Snowden provided evidence that the dominant Western powers were violating the very principles they advanced internationally. Particularly, the US government routinely defies the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution which prohibits illegal searches and seizures. Washington now engages in universal data collection targeting all Americans and actually has extended this practice throughout the world. When bureaucratic leaders have testified before Congress and lied about these procedures, thus committing a crime, no one has ever been charged for their deceit after the Snowden revelations were made public. Hypocrisy weakens Western soft power and makes it more difficult for states to follow the United States on principle as Washington does not follow the guidelines put in place to protect its citizens.

This foreign policy, economic, and democratic ineffectuality are problematic for Western soft power, but American and European society have been in decline for decades. The problem is that the dominant positivistic mentality prevents the affected cultures from examining the causes of social breakdown while instead focusing on specific signs. As a result, we are unable to identify the origin of Western weakness. A quote by Wendell Berry indicates what we are witnessing today:

> Mostly, we do not speak of our society as disintegrating. We would prefer not to call what we are experiencing social disintegration. But we are endlessly preoccupied with the symptoms: divorce, venereal disease, murder, rape, debt, bankruptcy, pornography, teenage pregnancy, fatherless children, motherless children, child suicide, public childcare, retirement homes, nursing homes, toxic waste, soil loss, soil and water and air pollution, government secrecy, government lying, government crime, civil violence, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, abortion as "birth control," the explosion of garbage, hopeless poverty, unemployment, unearned wealth. We know the symptoms well enough. All the plagues of our time are symptoms of a general disintegration. We are capable, really only of the forcible integration of centralization—economic, political, military, and educational—and always at the cost of social and cultural disintegration. . . . That we prefer to deal piecemeal with the problems of disintegration keeps them "newsworthy" and profitable to the sellers of cures. To see them as merely the symptoms of a greater problem would require hard

> thought, a change of heart, and a search for the fundamental causes. (1989, page 13–32)

The Western world has a tendency to see each social problem as unique and unconnected to other phenomena experienced in contemporary life. Berry's quote was published in 1989 and the world has further developed so that more negative symptoms are present as Western society is further fragmented. In chapter 2, we identified several causes in the broader Western ethos that are presented as liberating forces but that are, in reality, socially destructive. The nations adopting these norms will experience the same social breakdown present within the West and, because they adopt the same philosophic approach to reality, they will fail to anticipate the negative consequences or to identify their origin after they occur. Instead, they will look for piecemeal solutions that will work to cover the symptoms but allow the cause to remain and this will result in additional social, political, and economic breakdowns.

In a similar way, it is very difficult for Europe and Washington to honestly assess problems that emerged because its short-term policies produced unanticipated consequences. For example, Europe cannot ask questions concerning the relationship between its immigration policy and the rise of terrorism because this would appear racist and therefore be politically incorrect. While Europe is showcasing the post-national cultures that are particularly dominant within Germany, France, and the Netherlands, is it able to assess the long-term consequences of the loss of a national culture? Is a national culture valuable? Is it racist to protect one's nation from immigrants who have no intention of ever integrating but wish to build separate cultures within their new state? The inability to ask such questions means that Europe will never address the actual causes leading to the destruction of its unique civilizations or the more frequent manifestations of violence against the local population by immigrants. The likely consequence is that these conditions will get much worse and actually aggravated by the policies Europe employs to address them. Political correctness prevents the West from honestly assessing and thereby correcting the problems that are ever more present within its societies. There is little reason to believe that things will improve in the West and as this becomes more broadly understood globally, Washington and Brussels will have more difficulty in marketing its positions in other countries.

The West suffers from a broken economic system and social breakdown and ignores its domestic problems as it seeks to offer assistance and universalize its values. States embracing Western norms historically were expected to prosper both politically and in the market, but today the United States and Western European states have failed to maintain their economic proficiency and are less attractive to emerging countries. Eventually, states will see the

link between the proposed ethos and its consequent social breakdown and this will also weaken the West.

## RUSSIA'S CHALLENGE

Russia may appear to be an inferior country to leading Western powers, but it plays a vital role globally when it challenges the dominant liberal consensus. Russia's greatest contribution to international affairs is that it offers an alternative vision to the West and this gives room to other nations to challenge American and European global positions. While Moscow gives its citizens fewer political rights and civil liberties, the central government may be the only free country globally as it has the ability to challenge the secular liberal consensus. This role also makes Russia a larger Western adversary than security concerns alone would dictate and, therefore, Moscow is more frequently targeted by American and EU criticism than other rival states. Russia pays a price for this opposition but it also gains legitimacy when leaks reveal Western double standards.

Russia's soft power seeks to defend itself by showing Western hypocrisy to the world and thereby defending Moscow's policies to reveal that they are not morally inferior. The relationship is symbiotic in that the West seeks to discredit Russia and frequently criticizes its leadership and policies, but Moscow has survived this by highlighting American and EU duplicity. For example, the European Union markets itself as a successful democracy, but does not sanction its members when they deny rights to Russian citizens. Estonia and Latvia make their Russian residents second class citizens and yet Brussels would not allow other member states to create similar policies toward ethnic minorities. The more the West attacks Russia, the greater Moscow's response highlights double standards.

The Orthodox nations within Europe find themselves targeted by the secular and nihilistic Western culture and turn to Moscow for protection. Russia has become the Orthodox Christian protector and this expands its soft power when its allies are under fire. Armenia and Serbia are two states that were involved in military struggles with their non-Orthodox neighbors who turned to Moscow for help. Russia, unlike the EU or the United States, has been willing to protect foreign Christian populations and this has provided Moscow with additional soft power even within the West. Orthodox nations look to Russia for protection from the West and maintain their alliances with Moscow even after gaining membership in Western institutions.

## THE COMPETITION FOR EASTERN EUROPE AND CHINA

While Russia and the West are fighting to gain influence and secure long-term alliances that will bring geopolitical control over Eastern Europe, the ultimate beneficiary may not be either party but Beijing. Since Russia stands as the sole voice opposing Washington, Brussels, and their cultural ethos, this rivalry creates room for other states to also stand against the West and offer alternative visions for international relationships. China, like the United States in the years immediately following World War II, is working to protect its partner states' sovereignty. This is attractive to small states who find themselves in a struggle between Russia, who presses for subjugation, and the West who desires assimilation. Neither offers a more alluring foreign policy than Beijing, who is poised to have more influential soft power and a greater presence in world affairs due to its economic prowess, growing military might, and willingness to protect its allies' domestic autonomy.

Russian efforts to unmask Western hypocrisy and duplicity and show that neither the United States nor the EU offer superior political systems also aim to reveal that although Moscow may have some political weakness, it does not offer morally inferior alternatives to those presented by Washington or Brussels. Ironically, this weakens Western legitimacy and it works to make Moscow acceptable, but it does not increase its attractiveness. China is well positioned to benefit as it gains recognition internationally through an expansion of its competence and by making no demands on its friends other than cutting their diplomatic relations with Taiwan. The states that come into China's fold have to make no other sacrifices as there is no attempt to force its partners to embrace and enact domestic policies that would universalize Chinese values. Similarly, its partner states do not have to enact democratic norms, change family law, or institute standards that would weaken authoritarian government or curb corruption. Thus, China offers an attractive counter to Western and Russian soft power and stands to make future gains in Eastern Europe. The Russian-Western split will allow China to increase its influence and further establish itself in the region than it would if it were solidly in one camp. However, Beijing's expansion will be weaker in Eastern Europe because of the region's cultural and religious identity and its proximity to both Moscow and the West.

Most Eastern European states have democratic norms and are positioned to be natural allies to the West. Russia has a special relationship with Orthodox states within Europe where it stands as their protector and also with states that wish to resist democratic norms, such as Belarus. While China has made inroads in Eastern Europe by focusing its investments and influence in the Czech Republic, its cultural prowess is much weaker. China's ability to further its Eastern European presence is limited unless Europe suffers a new economic crisis or a new scandal further reveals Western or Russian hypocri-

sy. Even in this case, China is likely to be an external regional power and have a more limited cultural soft power across Eastern Europe due to its geographic and civilizational distance. China's gains from the competition over the region also enhance its security as it keeps the West and Russia divided and unable to contain Beijing's rise.

Washington and Brussels had to make a decision between supporting Ukraine against Moscow and forgoing Russian support in containing China's rise. Since Russia shares a vast border with China that cannot be adequately defended and has other military vulnerabilities, Moscow could have joined the Western alliance and balanced against Beijing in conjunction with the United States and the EU. What happened instead was that the West chose Ukraine over Russian cooperation against China. As a result, Russia has been forced to move its military closer to Eastern Europe than would otherwise be the case. Beijing can deploy a smaller force near the Russian border and this frees China's military to move troops and equipment to other areas and thereby gain a greater international presence than it would have if it had to balance against Moscow.

The competition between Russia and the West to gain control over Eastern Europe actually strengthens other international actors and weakens both parties. China is the largest beneficiary as it can use this disagreement to attack global norms and institutions that do not enhance its power, its military has greater geographic maneuverability, and Beijing can more easily spread its soft power into other regions. Western soft power as it has been manifested in Eastern Europe is detrimental to Washington and Europe's other goals and ultimately weakens its long-term attractiveness. Russia's soft power has provided other states with the legitimacy to offer alternative proposals to Western norms and while it makes its foreign policy tolerable, it does not increase Moscow's appeal.

## WESTERN INSTITUTIONAL DECLINE

The Western world may be undergoing a crisis that will see its major institutions fragment and weaken. There is a fragility and uncertainty over the European Union and NATO as there are important political actors in Europe and the United States that wish to remove their country from membership in these institutions. The first threat to the system came when Greece became insolvent and needed a bailout, but the Grexit did not occur as Greece remained within the Eurozone. The second threat saw the United Kingdom vote in June 2016 to leave the European Union and, while Britain is negotiating with Brussels over its exit terms, there have been calls within other member states to hold referenda on EU membership. There is a real possibility that some other important countries may leave in the coming years. Sever-

al right-wing parties have won office in Eastern Europe and are distancing their counties from the EU. The EU and NATO no longer have the same support within Europe and the United States and therefore have a questionable future. One likely scenario is that both institutions will continue to exist but will weaken with time.

Western soft power will grow weaker as its institutions decline. As Britain exits from the EU, Brussels can no longer offer the same incentives to states who wish to join and, consequently, the EU would have to reduce the demands placed on potential member states. While no states have exited NATO, the response to an Article V attack is less certain than ever before as the popular majority in all European member states would not support a war against Russia even if it were to attack a NATO ally. States that have sought membership for years have been frustrated and are unlikely to ever be able to join. The EU and NATO are the most significant Western institutions and their decline will reduce the ability of Western Europe and the United States to convince other states to support their policy proposals or to join the Western alliance.

There have been some voices attempting to blame Russia for the EU and NATO's decline, but this approach is doomed to fail as it seeks to link Moscow's propaganda to European economic problems or to its social troubles. This merely attempts to scapegoat Russia and avoids the hard examination into the many uncomfortable symptoms that point to Western decline. It is problematic to blame any external actor for one's internal problems. In short, the West is responsible for its institutional strength and deterioration.

## FIVE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

The world is experiencing a destabilizing contest between the West and Russia that may determine whether small states are able to resist the cultural hegemony originating in the European Union and the United States. The West has popular global culture which it uses to socially engineer widespread consent to its norms that target Eastern European nations. Additionally, the dominant international institutions present within Eastern Europe, specifically the European Union and NATO, create a second front that attempts to force these norms on smaller states seeking economic advancement and military protection from Russia. Moscow is countering with pressure to protect its own interests and moving to spread its influence into the region. The outcome has not been determined but there are some possible scenarios that may emerge.

## Russia Embraces Western Norms

The least likely option is for Moscow to embrace and adopt Western norms and become a protagonist advocating the global cultural hegemonic position. This outcome would require a Russian intellectual surrender and an admission that its efforts to protect its national heritage were mistaken. One consequence would be Russia's further weakening as a world power as it would become similar to Western European nations and lose its cultural and ethnic uniqueness. Russia would likely experience an even lower birthrate as its population decline would accelerate and it would become a post-national state. Russia as we know it would disappear from history and there would be several voids in world affairs that would create instability.

Moscow would accept a secondary position in its foreign policy as it would serve to advance Washington's and EU interests thus further integrating into Western institutions. Russia would work with the West to balance against China's rise and NATO would change its focus to Beijing. Moscow's military prowess would decline as its arms industry would weaken as it would no longer arm its client states, such as Syria, and it would therefore be unlikely to return to great power status in the immediate future. This would cause a sudden change in the global balance of power which would mean that groups that had depended on Moscow's protection would now find themselves forsaken.

Russian culture would be abandoned and it would not be able to protect or advocate for the Orthodox population nor would it continue to defend vulnerable ethnic groups depending on its support. Small states such as Armenia would particularly suffer as it is a Christian nation surrounded by enemies on multiple fronts. Azerbaijan and Turkey would be free to attack Yerevan because the West has adopted policies in the post-World War II era that have abandoned or threatened Christian populations in the Middle East. Globally, Christianity would suffer if Russia loses its cultural identity and stops protecting Christian populations in vulnerable regions.

Western democracies are driven by lobby groups and the military-industrial complex is powerful and works to maintain and justify large defense expenditures. If Russia were no longer a potential enemy, interest groups would need to replace Moscow and find another enemy to fill this gap. China would be the likely candidate and there would be a further military pivot to the Pacific and new institutions would be created or old ones adjusted to focus on containing Beijing. There are powerful groups within Washington and the EU that wish to maintain Russia as an enemy because it substantiates the narrative used to authorize large defense expenditures. The final outcome would be Eastern Europe's complete integration into the Western ethos and, as a consequence, its national cultures would be destroyed as they were assimilated. Ironically, these small nation-states need Russia to

maintain its ability to resist the negative elements presented in Western culture. If Moscow acquiesces to Washington and Brussels, the global hegemonic culture will have no functional opposition within Eastern Europe except for the Orthodox and Catholic presence and other small groups. This position would not be equipped to resist the secular transition as religious groups are eliminated from public discourse and other groups become ghettoized and unable to impact the nation. The region would be assimilated into the dominant ethos and adopt the social norms present in Western Europe. Paradoxically, an independent Russia which resists the dominant cultural ethos is necessary for Eastern European states to maintain their national heritage.

## Status Quo: Slow Decline of Western Institutions and a slow Russian Expansion

We have already showed earlier in this book that Western institutions, such as NATO and the European Union, are weakening and one likely scenario is their continual deterioration with time which will weaken Washington's and Brussels' legitimacy. According to a 2009 *World Politics* review that examined several books on American hegemony, the most optimistic thought was that the United States would only have twenty more years of dominance (Layne 2009). In other words, even the most hopeful analysis predicts Washington's regressing and the emergence of a new multipolar international system. It is an increasingly difficult task to find scholars, even in Europe and the United States, who believe that the West can maintain its leadership.[1] The 2008 economic crisis has damaged American soft power because it can no longer point to its domestic institutions and offer them as a global model that has no rivals. This weakens the West's soft power foundation as it can no longer be stated that our political institutions are the best and states that adopt them can expect to develop and prosper. When the agents marketing liberal institutions are in decline, they lose their attractiveness as their decade-long claims turn out to be without footing. Beijing is today able to maintain that their market system is superior as it has allowed China to rise to become a dominant economic power. Western political and economic systems are no longer appealing and are more difficult to promote than at any other time since the end of World War II. The vulnerabilities are now evident to the world and these weaknesses have not been addressed or corrected, but are present today.

The European Union and the United States have great military technology and large standing armies, but suffer from an inability to maintain public support for long-term conflicts. The American public has withdrawn its support from the Vietnam War, the 2001 Afghanistan conflict, and the 2003 Iraq War, and therefore, Washington abandoned or abated its commitment to its

own intervention. The European military structure is so problematic and weak that it is unable or unwilling to defend its borders and EU states have prioritized preserving the social welfare system over its defense. In his Harvard commencement address, Solzhenitsyn warned the West that its failure to sustain the conflict in Southeast Asia may have seemed like an expedient solution at the time but it was a fact that would weaken the United States and Europe in the world as it provided a script for how to get Washington to abandon its foreign conflicts. While the intention behind the withdrawal was to protect American military lives, this has the unintended negative consequence of providing a script on how to get the United States to abandon a foreign deployment. As such, a policy initiated to save lives may endanger the people it sought to protect. Likewise, Pape (2003) provides a study that demonstrates that democracies are weak when they occupy foreign lands and are confronted with suicidal terrorism. He shows that they withdraw their military around 50 percent of the time which has the unforeseen effect of again providing a known method to get Western democracies to end foreign military campaigns. Today, finicky Western publics may be their own worst enemy as they make it impossible for their leadership to make long-term commitments. As such, when the United States and European states deploy abroad for military operations, they should expect resistance because their inability to sustain conflict has strengthened those who oppose their presence. If European powers and the United States are unwilling to continue combat when confronting insurgencies in weak countries, is the West likely to withstand a long-term struggle against Russia?

What does this mean in regard to NATO's viability? Today, Western security institutions are strong as long as they are not directly challenged or where their common-defense provisions are enacted. The United States and important European powers have an incentive to back down when Russia directly challenges Western interests in Eastern Europe because otherwise the actual institutional weakness will be globally exposed. NATO will be inconsistent as it will employ tough rhetoric, but will unfailingly withdraw when it is directly challenged by Moscow. Russia also understands that NATO will not directly threaten its expansion as long as it moves slowly. If Moscow progresses gradually, member states will be able to maintain the pretext of NATO's security guarantees and not have to openly acknowledge NATO's decline. One consequence is that Eastern European states should lessen their dependence on Washington and Brussels as they make ever greater concessions to Moscow. Eventually, NATO's weakness will be evident to the general populations in Eastern Europe and its vulnerability will be continually challenged by a slow Russian expansion until Western security guarantees become meaningless. This transition may take a long time but this is the most likely scenario for NATO's future.

The West has more soft power than it should at present as it has deep economic and demographic vulnerabilities. Western Europe likewise faces budgetary problems as the national entitlement programs drain government finances and make it impossible for states to invest in long-term projects that will strengthen them in the future. The pension system can only be sustained when there is population growth and for decades European states have had low birth rates. It is only a matter of time before their pension systems collapse. Additionally, the demographic crisis and the growing immigration problem have led to post-national environments where the historic national cultures are disappearing and the new residents maintain loyalty to their traditional and ethnic heritage. Europe is unable to defend itself and cannot even control its borders. As states diversify racially, two tendencies emerge: (i) nationalism grows among the historically ethnic population and (ii) the immigrant population's identification with their new country weakens. National unity will weaken and states will become further divided and have to monitor domestic populations to prevent nationalistic violence and immigrant terrorism. Europe turned to immigrants as a short-term solution to preserve its pension systems, but this has led to a rejection of the EU's ethos and the creation of divisions between the dominant historical society and new settler groups.

This is the most likely scenario and if this comes to pass Eastern Europe will find itself gradually abandoned by the institutions it made great sacrifices to join. The West will continue to offer convincing rhetoric but when it comes time to act, NATO and Washington will not resist Russia's expansion into Eastern Europe. Globally, Western intellectual attempts to promote democracy will fall on deaf ears as China's rise offers a model that may be more persuasive to governments who rely on coercion. The dominant European states, such as Germany and France, change rules without the broader EU's consent and then try to impose these changes on the other states so that Eastern European countries become more subservient and their EU membership functions to strengthen Berlin and Paris. Eastern Europe will be threatened by both the West and Russia with both sides seeking to integrate and subordinate them so that they become instruments of a greater power. As it declines, the West will be asked to make further sacrifices to preserve the status quo and Eastern Europe will ultimately be abandoned and forced to deal with Moscow on its own. There is no reasonable prospect for the West to honor its long-term commitments and help the exposed Eastern European nations. This also means that the prospect of violent conflict is unlikely in the short-term because Russia will be able to accomplish its goals by waiting out Western decline.

## RAPID DECLINE OF WESTERN INSTITUTIONS

Today multiple movements exist across Europe and the United States suggesting that the EU and NATO are more vulnerable than at any other time since their foundation. The key Western international institutions may rapidly end if powerful states abandon their commitment and cease to support the treaties. The growth of anti-EU political parties across Europe and the Brexit vote suggest that the European Union has the potential to end suddenly as states face increasing internal pressure to withdraw their membership.

The demographic crisis and the turn towards immigration have led Western Europe to lose its ethnic identity and steadily become post-national. One consequence is that nationalism is on the rise and as new governments come to power, there is increasing pressure to reject the European ethos and for states to preserve their national identity. This opens the door to right-wing parties that explicitly state that, if elected, they will end EU and NATO membership. France and Germany are the dominant players within Brussels and while they are perfectly willing to dictate policies to other states, neither is prepared to submit to an EU that allows smaller states any authority over them even if this were necessary to preserve EU institutions. Also, Berlin broke the Schengen treaty rules that created the border-free area within Europe by opening itself to Syrian refugees without consent and then attempted to impose refugees on other EU states. Hungary and Poland are nations that have rejected EU imperatives and also refuse the dominant Western European secular and nihilistic ethos. After Britain, it is possible to foresee other states walk away from the treaty and end their EU membership.

The American military has been present within Europe from World War II and originally this had allowed states to rebuild following the continent's damage in the conflict. Today, there is little justification for the United States' continued presence on the continent as European states over-rely on Washington to defend them and neglect their military spending. Donald Trump's election and his willingness to work with Russia provide a signal to NATO states that Washington is losing its resolve to support their defense when European partners continually under-invest in their own military. NATO members are able to maintain high social welfare spending and use Washington to avoid having to pay for their defense. European nations do not even have the willingness to protect their borders as immigrants freely enter the EU through primitive transportation and are seemingly able to permanently settle there. Trump has repeatedly demanded that the EU and NATO states assume their security expenses or pay Washington for the troops stationed within the region. If Europe does not step forward and strengthen its military or compensate Washington, and politically either option will be difficult, there is a possibility that the United States could abandon NATO and leave Europe to defend itself from Moscow. Theoretically, this transition

could take place rapidly if Washington issues an ultimatum to NATO states that could end the alliance if rejected. Trump's arguments on this subject seemed to resonate broadly across the American public and provide a signal that European countries should not expect the United States to defend them indefinitely. If Washington refuses to back NATO, its member states do not have enough military prowess to defend themselves from Moscow and this could destroy Europe's long-term security.

## WESTERN ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

One tragic possibility is an economic collapse within the Western alliance so severe that it could effectively end NATO and the European Union. The difficult reality is that many of the structural economic issues that led to the 2008 recession are still present as the policies adopted to provide remedy focused on concealing the symptoms rather than addressing the fundamental problems. Most countries have resorted to printing money to cover expenses and this is viable as long as the extra money gets absorbed into the system. There are two problems when this approach is used to fund government: (i) in the future it will inevitably lead to inflation and this is likely to lower Western living standards; (ii) when new economic problems emerge, governments will have less flexibility since they are relying on printed money to manage ordinary times. This means that future recessions will be more severe because governments will not be able to inject additional funds into the market without risking massive inflation. Since the West's policies will generate future inflation, this could lower the living standards so significantly that it will weaken its military and potentially destroy Europe and America's economic structure.

The United States faces additional problems as it currently has more monetary flexibility than other states due to the dollar serving as the global currency. This has allowed Washington to finance its foreign military adventures, maintain bases overseas, and preserve its leadership position without having to rely on taxing the American public. If the dollar loses its seigniorage privilege, then the United States will have to retrench globally because it will have to pay for its foreign military operations with taxpayer support. This would prevent the country from maintaining its presence in Europe and would mean NATO's end. China has taken over as the world's leading manufacturing state and, historically, a country in this position, if it remains long enough and has the desire, is in a position to give its currency the seigniorage privilege. Oil states can also change the dollar's status by accepting payment in another currency and this would jeopardize America's leadership. The problem Washington faces is that no currency maintains its seigniorage position indefinitely; when the United States loses this, it will have to

confront massive inflation from the global oversupply of dollars and it will have to tax its citizens at a much higher rate in order to maintain its military at the same time that it confronts a decline in its living standard. One important American statesman, Chas Freeman (2011) examines Washington's foreign policy weakness and notes that the most likely event that would require the United States to engage in new strategic thinking is a fiscal collapse that would make its present reliance on military strength unsustainable. The United States faces a major risk to its hegemonic position that is unobservable to its citizens and that will come as a surprise to them when the currency devalues.

The United States and the major European powers have a realistic potential to fall into a severe economic crisis that will lower Western living standards and create serious market problems that in turn could destroy NATO and the EU, although NATO faces the greater risk.

## WAR

The final possibility is direct military conflict between Moscow and the West. We hope that this is the least likely outcome, but there are dangerous warning signs in Eastern Europe and the Middle East particularly that foreshadow possible war. This probability is more likely today than at any time since the Soviet Union's collapse. War could emerge within Eastern Europe if the West starts to arm Ukrainian nationalist forces and the local Russian population finds itself more vulnerable as this would force Putin to intervene. The frequent military encounters between Russia and NATO forces in Europe could lead to an accident where the party that believes it was wronged would have an incentive to strike back. There are multiple scenarios in which a dispute could emerge within the Middle East and generate a militarized dispute in Eastern Europe: Turkey, which is a NATO member, may intervene in Syria to protect the Sunni population and attack Russian troop; Washington could establish a no-fly zone in Syria that would see the American Air Force attempt to ground Moscow's fighter planes as the retaliation could manifest itself in Eastern Europe. In both cases, a Middle Eastern conflict could spread to Europe and provide the context for such a war. Russia has deployed advanced weapons in Syria that are specifically designed to confront American fighter jets and generals on both sides of the conflict believe that they have the military advantage to prevail if war were to emerge. This further weakens the desire of all parties to avert conflict.

Russian and Western soft power are equally problematic for Eastern European states as the dominant players seek to impose their norms and absorb states into their cultural realm. When we decided to write this work, we saw that Eastern Europe was in a precarious position and neither power vying for

control was interested in preserving national cultures. While Western readers can easily see problems with Russia's approach to the region, it is more difficult for them to perceive the problems that originate with Brussels and Washington's policies. This required us to take a different tactic with our chapters and be more explicit in identifying the dangers present within the Western approach. Specifically, Eastern European nations are asked to join the West in a way that destroys their cultures and imposes a new ethos that is self-destructive in the long run.

In authoring a work that seeks to look at the negative consequences soft power generates, the final outcome should be displeasing to those who universally support Washington, Brussels, or Moscow. When one defends any great power, it is normal to ignore the negative consequences it imposes on friends wishing to form an alliance with it. The Western world presents its philosophic ethos as the only universally valid approach to contemporary life; however, there are major problems in the dominant schools of thought originating in the West. Historically, Eastern Europe has suffered disproportionally from Western ideas as World War I saw monarchy end and democracy emerge. Modernity also generated communism and fascism and the forces unleashed by these ideologies were unimaginably destructive during World War II and during the occupation that followed until Eastern European nations were freed in 1989. The irony is that while communism was imposed from the East, its philosophic origins are Western as it was rooted in positivistic, Hegelian, and economic thought. Fascism is likewise rooted in Western thought as it is tied to liberal progressivism and socialism. Therefore, the totalitarian movements that were manifested in Eastern Europe in the second half of the twentieth century were all rooted in Western thought.

The dominant Western thinking today is different but equally important to Eastern Europeans who see their cultures threatened by both the East and West. The philosophic dangers Eastern Europe faces today are rooted in contemporary Western ideas which are likely to emerge in consumerism, individualism, secularism, and relativism. All are expected to bring long-term social damage to national societies and result in weakened economies and empty cultures. Ironically, these same forces are also creating complications within Russia which needs to confront the problematic Western norms within its borders as well. Eastern Europe will struggle to preserve its culture, but this is also the only way it can maintain its freedom. Regional states need to preserve their way of life and national uniqueness even when new threats that attempt to subsume its cultures into the greater West or Russia emerge. Eastern Europeans are tempted to trade their cultural distinctiveness for international security and, if this trade is made, new nations will be subsumed into great powers and at the cost of losing their identity in the process.

## NOTE

1. International relations scholars have been predicting the slow decline of Washington's global dominance for decades. For example, see Robert Gilpin's *U.S. Power and the Multinational Corporation: The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment* (1975) or (1981) *War and Change in World Politics,* Robert Keohane's *After Hegemony,* or Immanuel Wallerstein's (2004) *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction.*

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